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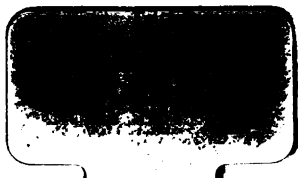
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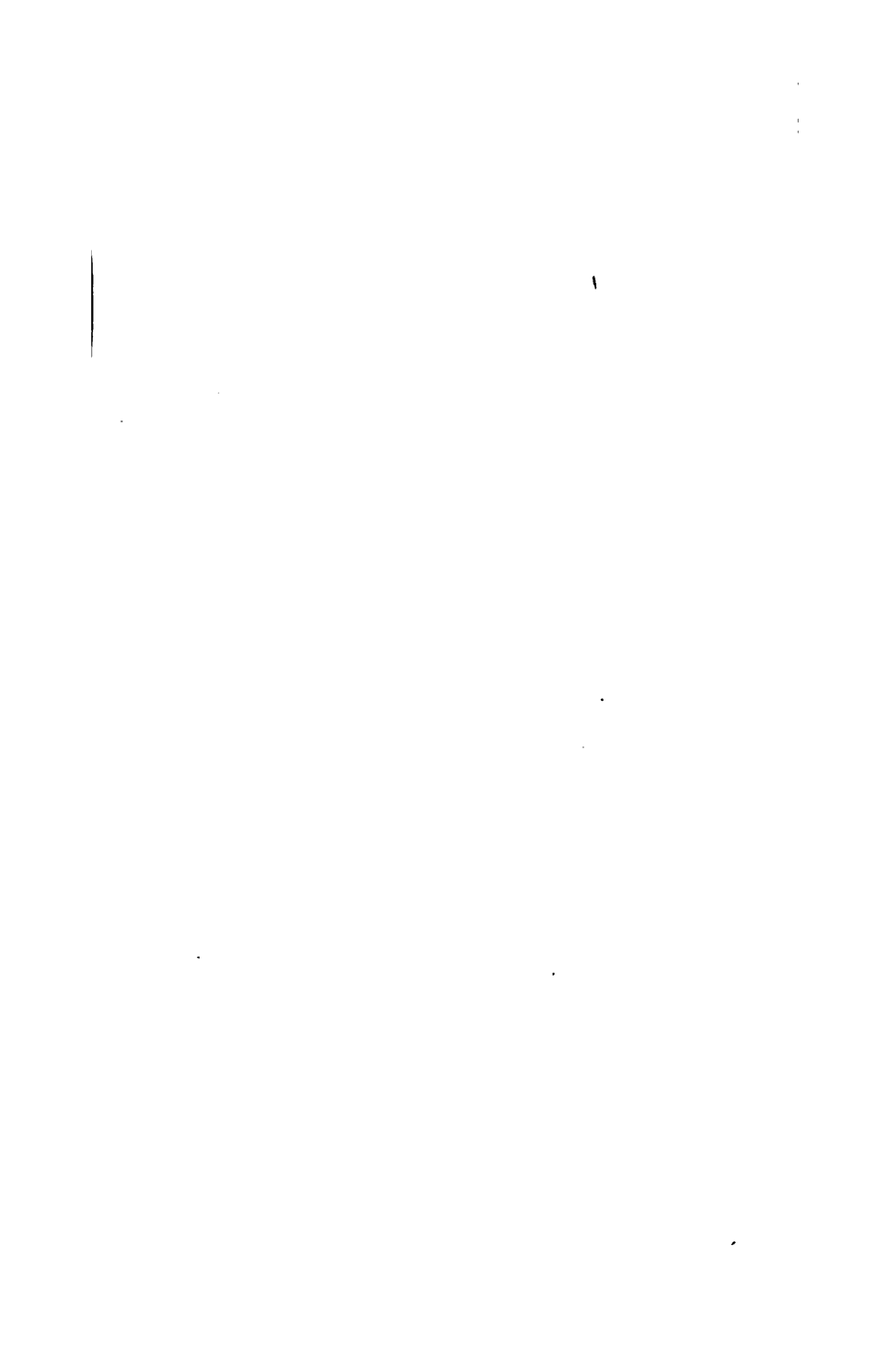


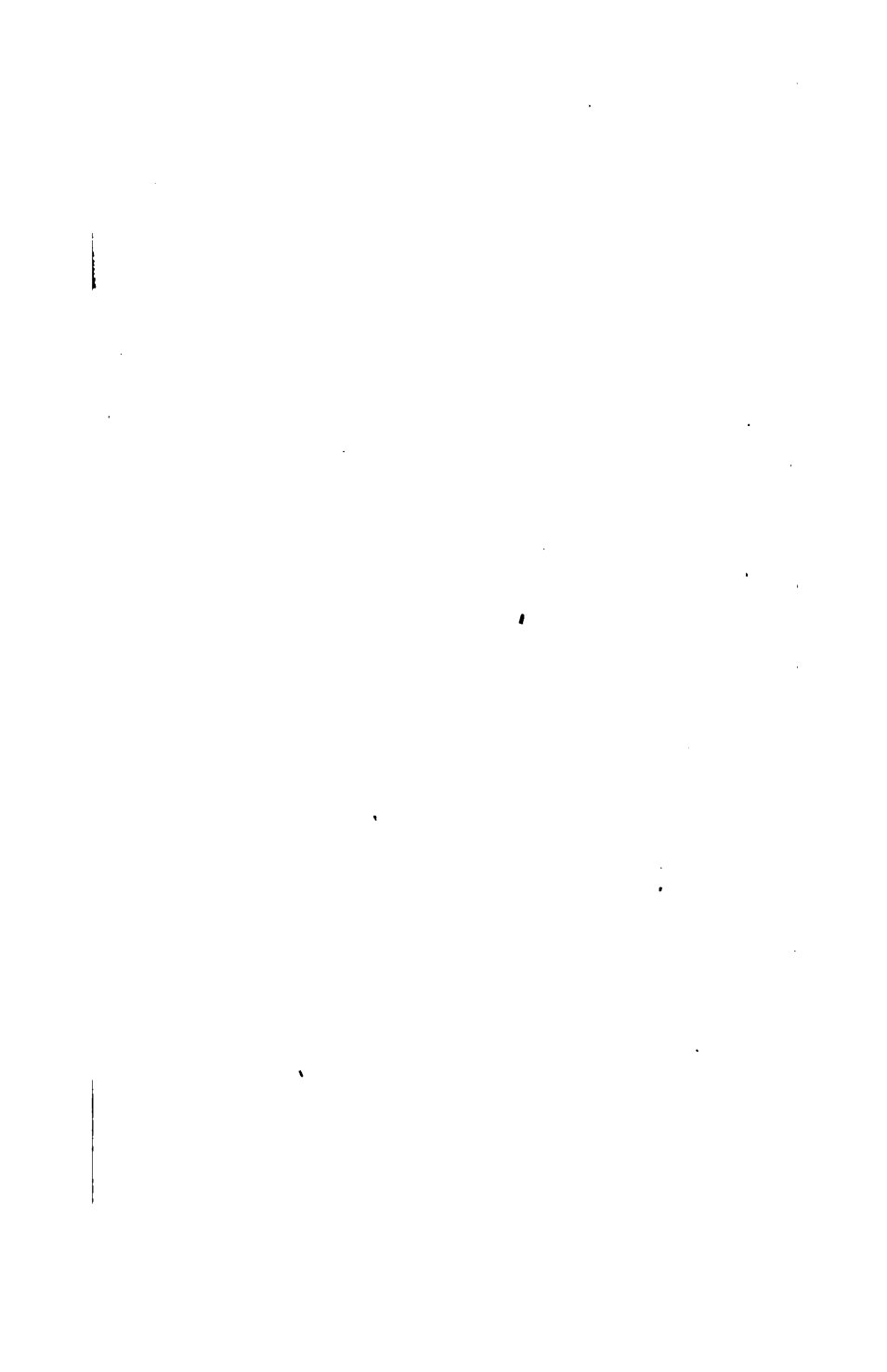
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A
T A L E
OF THE
O L D E N T I M E.
BY
A HARROW BOY.

Mio primo giovenil errore.

PETRARCA.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR JOHN ANDREWS,
167, NEW BOND-STREET.

1821.

**B. M'Millan, Printer,
Bow-Street, Covent-Garden.**

TO
HIS SCHOOL-FELLOWS,

THIS TALE

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED,

BY

THE AUTHOR.



THE first outline of "The Tale of the Olden Time" was sketched at the age of fourteen, and designed as the foundation of a tragedy. The Author soon discovered, that the events were totally unfit for such an application; and the story lay forgotten in his desk, till, about two years afterwards, during an illness, which separated him from every more serious occupation, he found an amusement in adapting the incidents to their present purpose.—As the pages past through the press, they have had the benefit of receiving the correction—the very slight correction—of an elder hand, which has occasionally altered a word, or modulated a sentence.

March 12, 1821.



A TALE
OF
THE OLDEN TIME.

Though to the clouds his castle seemed to climb,
And frown'd defiance on the desperate foe;
Though deem'd invincible, the conqueror, Time,
Levell'd the fabric, as the founder, low.

CUNNINGHAM.

ROMANTICALLY situated on the coast of Cumberland, in all the pride of Gothic magnificence, arose the castle of Montresor. Its demesne extended far to the east and to the south, over fertile vales and sloping uplands. The cultivated landscape, with its hedge-rows intersecting it, with its numerous flocks and herds, with the scattered cottages of the hus-

bandmen, partially disclosed amid the tufts of surrounding coppice, or excluded from the sight, and only distinguished in their situation by the curling smoke, winding its upward way to meet the clouds of heaven, presented to the view a scene of fertility and beauty, that was not a very ordinary object in that border country. Nature here seemed to have flown to man for her protection, and to repose in peace at the foot of the castle of Montresor, secure from the tumult that surrounded her. The castle was screened by venerable forests. The invader of the North, as he saw its towers and its battlements frowning in the distance, retreated suddenly at the sight: for well had the courage and victorious prowess of their lords been tried against the infesting troops of Scottish marauders. But the seafaring man, who held his course along the Irish channel, as from the west that majestic fabric opened upon his view, or as the dark forests of Montresor became faintly visible through the haze of morn-

ing, or faded in the twilight of the evening, pointed them out to the shipmate by his side, and told that "the ample gates of that rich castle were ever open to alleviate the distresses of the shipwrecked mariner."

Of those venerable and extensive forests, one decayed trunk, broken by the tempest and blasted by the lightning, alone remains; to which an old fisherman, whose solitary cabin is formed from the collected ruins of that once proud castle, moors at evening his little wherry. That rich and beautiful demesne, now an uncultivated waste, has become the haunt of the screaming halcyon. With their castle and their forests, so has the family of Montresor fallen into decay. The glory gained by old warriors of the name, has been forgotten in the applauses attending other victories and other conquerors; and the following traditionary tale is the only one, in which the name of Montresor is now remembered.

CHAPTER I.

—————'Ως ἄπ' ἐλπίδων
 Οὐχ ὅστις ἐξέτιμπος ἐσιδεῖσθαι.

THE young and valiant Earl Henry de Montresor, endowed with all the richest qualities that poetry has imagined in the knights of chivalry—courteous in the hall, fair in favour, gentle in manners, invincible in fight—had already possessed himself of a celebrity that surpassed the ancient reputation of his noble house, and acquired a name for courage and for virtue, that all England honoured and respected; when, on the return of Edward the Third from a campaign in France, he was summoned instantly to repair to the king's court at Windsor, to defend himself from unexpected charges of disloyalty and dishonour, secretly and anonymously alleged against him.

Impatient of the least suspicion on his fame, and burning with desire to clear a reputation which had for so many generations been the boast of his progenitors, and which had been handed down from sire to son, deriving from every descendant a brighter lustre, and a more conspicuous distinction, the Earl, with a small band of attendants, hastened to refute the slanderous imputation, relying on his own integrity for the destruction of the charge, and confiding in the justice of his sovereign for the detection and the punishment of his accusers.

When he was about to depart, the Countess of Montresor, bearing their son, the little Edward, in her arms, and accompanied by Rupert the brother of Earl Henry, and the wife of Rupert, the Lady Philippa, attended him to the castle gates. The portcullis was raised, the drawbridge was down, and the attendants, who had been chosen to accompany their lord, each holding his horse by the bridle, were already in the yard awaiting the signal of de-

parture. A trusty groom led about the prancing palfrey of Earl Henry, who irresolutely lingered to depart, hesitating between the opposite commands of his duty and his affection. His wife hung weeping upon his arm, and while he pressed her nearer to his breast, and kissed his infant which she held, he could not bear to leave behind him the beings who were so dear to him—to whom he was himself so dear. At length, collecting his resolution, and pressing them closer in his embrace, he said, “Do not weep, Isabella, I leave you, to defend my injured fame, that I may return more worthy to you and to my boy. It is not enough, that *you* alone should know how unjust are my accusers; my country and my king must learn, that the fame of Henry de Montresor *may* be attacked, but *cannot* be overpowered. The breath of slander I have no power to controul, nor can I prevent the idle winds from blowing against my battlements; but my towers are built so firm, that the winds

hurt them not, but recoiling from them, whistle surlily the signal of their own defeat; and so, Isabella, by the will of Heaven and my king, shall the wicked assailers of thy husband's honour find, that they have ineffectually directed their attacks, and lament in their disgrace and their defeat, the efforts which shall confirm my honour, and expose their infamy.—I must go, my love:—this dear boy of ours must not through life be branded as the son of a disloyal, and degraded parent.”—He again kissed his infant and its mother: Isabella smiled through her tears, her approbation of his words;—then turning towards Lord Rupert, he continued, “Rupert, to you, my brother, I confide these precious charges, together with the government of the castle, till my return—that will be soon, very soon, Isabella;—and you, brother, and your gentle lady, will, I know, do all affection can suggest, to cheer the melancholy hours of my love during the period of my absence.”

The Lord Rupert and the Lady Philippa, while they spoke their sorrow for their dear brother's departure, and their lamentations of the cause, readily promised to do all that he required. The Lady Isabella thanked them for their affection, and dried her tears, that her lord might not have the pain of his journey rendered more grievous, by the remembrance that she was left lamenting. At length, after many attempts to depart, and as often returning, either again to bid adieu, or to give some trifling order, which seemed remembered only to protract his departure, Earl Henry, accompanied by his band of chosen followers, passed onward upon his journey. The drawbridge was again raised, the gates were again closed, the portcullis was again let down, and the many inmates of the castle, whom curiosity had collected together in the yard, to witness the departure of their lord, conversing on the dangers of the journey, strolled lazily back to their occupations.

Not so the wife of Montresor: the gates had no sooner closed upon her lord, than, bearing her child with her, she ascended the loftiest turret of the castle, whence she might the longer gaze upon her husband; and, unmarked by any curious eye, which might elsewhere pry into her holy sorrow, indulge her tears for his departure. From the same turret she had often unweeping seen her noble Henry, at the head of his trusty and unconquered vassals, with banners flying, and minstrels playing, go forth in all the pomp of war to battle; then she had herself girt on his armour, and fearlessly, while she arrayed him in his military accoutrements, caroled some gay and warlike measure. But then he went to fight against enemies whose strength was known, and where superior valour might secure success: now, on the contrary, his enemies were nameless and unseen: if he cleared himself before the king, still ignorant against whom to guard, danger was ever to be feared; and the Lady Isabella

knew, that where the heart was base enough to attempt the destruction of its enemy by a false and secret accusation, never would a hand be wanting to vindicate by murder the defeat of malice.

As from the turret her eye caught the last glimpse of Montresor, she felt a melancholy presage, that he never would rejoice her sight again—her heart sunk within her at the thought, and placing her kneeling boy upon her lap, she held his little hands between hers, and taught him to repeat after her, prayers to that high throne, where Almighty Mercy listens even to an infant's supplication, for the safe return of his father.

Long are the hours of expectation; and how slow did the lazy foot of time appear to the Lady Isabella, while waiting tidings from her lord. She trusted not to the warder for intelligence of the approach of Montresor, but anxiously walked the battlements from morn till nightfall, fondly imagining that the attentive

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and undeviating eye of her affection would be more quick to catch the first sight of his appearance, than the careless and wandering look of a mercenary vassal.—“The seaman on the mast-top has often failed to perceive the land which he was stationed to discover;”—said Isabella, when entreated to leave her familiar stand upon the watch-tower;—“while the stray glance of one on the deck below, whose ardent love was yearning to reach the shores, where he should again be cheered by the unaccustomed names of lover or of friend, has quickly penetrated the obscurity of distance, and marked the dim outline of his native land, rising like a faint cloud above the level of the ocean.”

A joyful sight at length met the eye of the watchful wife of Montresor: little less than a month had passed, when there arrived a messenger, with intelligence that the king, after hearing the defence of Earl Henry, had declared the charges against him totally un-

founded; and that his lord was on the point of returning to his home, enriched with presents from his sovereign, and with new honours added to the already highly ennobled name of Montresor. At news like this, the castle again re-echoed with sounds of joy. The Lord Rupert and the Lady Philippa mingled with their loud congratulations to the Lady Isabella, the praises of their dear brother the noble Earl, and vehement execrations against his secret accusers. A few more days of anxious expectation passed away, when a second courier bore them the information, that the following day would restore his master to his wife and child.

Among his family and his vassals, preparations were now anxiously commenced to greet Earl Henry on his return. On the day of happy expectation, long before sun-rise, the castle-yard swarmed with a busy crowd, conscious of their best habiliments, eager to congratulate the triumph, and welcome the arrival of their

lord.—From the very dawn of morning the noble mother and her boy had resumed their accustomed seat on the battlements, watching for their husband and father. In every cloud of dust that was accidentally excited in the distance, Isabella imagined to herself a signal of her lord's approach: and when the mists and glooms of the approaching darkness stole over the landscape, as she eagerly observed the vague and uncertain shadows, or attentively listened to the mingled sounds that occasionally broke upon the silence of the hour, her fancy often seemed to catch the sight of his banner dimly appearing through the twilight, or to hear the busy voices of his attendants borne from afar upon the gale of evening.

But at length all watching became useless: the dark night shut out the landscape from her view, and her Henry had arrived not.—The morning, which had beamed with such joyous hopes, was heavily succeeded by a night of uncertain terrors and confused apprehensions.

A party of the vassals had been dismissed early in the morning to meet their chief, and bring back tidings of his approach. At midnight, when all the inhabitants of the castle were absorbed in fear for the safety of their lord, they returned bearing with them the bodies of two of the Earl's attendants, who had been found murdered at the entrance of the forest. To the mind of Isabella conviction of the dreadful truth instantly flashed: the secret enemy was powerful, and the victim, whose honour had supported him against the accusations of his foes, had fallen by a more violent assault. Yet still the body of Montresor was undiscovered—she held her child convulsively to her breast, tearless and silent.—A horrid lingering hope seemed to keep its hold on her imagination—a hope which painfully overcharged the faculties of nature—which absorbed all thought, and agitated every nerve—which appeared to strain the chords of life to the utmost, till any event that struck upon

them, whether of sorrow or of joy, threatened destruction to the reason or the life.

For days she refused either to put off the robes in which she had adorned herself to welcome the return of her expected lord, and was careless of refreshment or repose. All the day she rapidly paced the battlements, her gaze constantly intent upon the direction by which she hoped her husband would return; and all the long, slow night, she listened with the anxious expectation of hearing his bugle sounded at the gate.

At length, a scarf stained with blood, was found by a peasant on the skirts of the forest. The Lady Isabella immediately recognized it as her lord's: the fate of Earl Henry could be no longer doubted. A faint shriek spoke her sense of the tremendous conviction that assailed her, and, fainting at the sight, she was borne by her attendants to her chamber.

Isabella awaked from her swoon to the recollections of her misery, and the frantic ravings of despair. Amid the loud lamentations

for the death of Earl Henry her reason often wavered. Her mind, enfeebled by her sorrow, seemed to have lost the vigour that was demanded to impose restraint on the imagination. It was not insanity, for she could love and weep; it was not reason, for her words fell from her without her knowledge, and her action was irrelevant.—The agitated intellect seemed to repose awhile in forgetfulness of the past, and then she talked wildly of her Henry, and decked herself to do honour to his triumph, and walked gaily forth, and caroled as she went to welcome him at the gate of the castle; but ere she reached it, the mind would again awaken to the apprehension of her affliction—the sudden recollection of the realities of life would burst upon the memory, and the song would cease, and the smile of her visionary state pass from her, and the tears would start into her eyes, and with the head dejected, she would return slowly and mournfully to her solitary chamber.

Emma, an orphan relative of the house of

Montresor, whom Earl Henry had protected from her childhood, deeply sympathizing in the misery of Isabella, tried all that gratitude and affection could suggest, to alleviate it. She was ever present in each calmer moment, to soothe with her harp, the sense of grief, or with suggestions of religion, to command the resignation of Isabella. Still it was long ere the widow of Earl Henry had gained sufficient controul over her sorrows, to join again in the society of the castle; and when at length she collected the resolution to quit the solitude of her chamber, though neither her words or actions displayed any symptoms of derangement, yet from a certain agitation of manner and expression, and an unsteady wandering of the eye, it appeared as if her reason, though not altogether fallen, held but an uncertain seat, and was on the very brink of falling.

The Lord Rupert, in compliance with the promise made to his brother, had from the time of his departure, taken the government of the

castle into his own hands, which he guided till the fate of its master became known, in a manner such as Earl Henry himself could not have disapproved. But no sooner was the death of that nobleman universally believed, than, as guardian to the infant heir of Montresor, he began to lord it over the vassals, with all the arrogance of new-raised power and of borrowed dignity. The internal economy of the castle became totally changed. As before, it was kept regularly garrisoned, and in a state of defence against the hostile incursions of the borderers : but while the walls glittered with the weapons of armed troops, and the banners of Montresor were displayed on the battlements; in the hall, gallant knights and festive dames were mingling in the luxuries of the banquet, the noise of revelry, and the melodies of song. Every lady had her knight, who sung verses to her beauty; danced her partner in the hall, or fought in mimic war as her champion in the daily tilts of the castle-yard. And the

knights, forgetful of wars carried on in foreign lands, and enervated by pleasure, seemed envious of no prouder distinction than a lady's smile, and all the idle sports and gaudy pageants of peace were collected to reside within the walls of an embattled castle.

Such were the changes which had taken place, when the Lady Isabella descended from her apartments. These light rejoicings were grief and torment to her; they seemed to have no other purpose than to insult the memory of her lord, and increase her anguish. But depressed by adversity, which had nearly drawn her to the grave, or to worse than death, the annihilation of her reason, she now possessed not energy sufficient to contend against the overbearing government of Lord Rupert; and he, eager to catch at any means by which he might secure the power of the castle wholly in his own hands, insinuated among the guests, that the widow of his brother was still the victim of the derangement which had attended the

first agonies of her affliction; and treated her as one unable to guide, and unworthy to be consulted. The sensual, collected for purposes of pleasure, do not very scrupulously investigate, where neither their amusements or their interests are concerned; and perceiving the Lady Isabella pale and silent, when every other face was brightening with the glow of real or artificial beauty, and every smiling lip was fluent with some mirthful argument, they received without suspicion the rumour of Lord Rupert, and passed unheeded the Lady Isabella, as an unhappy being, whom the slightest notice might irritate, by disturbing the melancholy tenor of her madness.

In Isabella's mind, constantly thinking on her departed lord, and revolving on the persons likely to have committed so great an outrage against one whose deeds merited ill of no man, the conduct of Lord Rupert could not but excite the most horrible suspicions against him. If these suspicions were justly founded, the

object was apparent. An ambitious desire of his brother's possessions must have actuated the murder. Before he could obtain those possessions, another was *yet* to fall. And Isabella's grief for her husband's murder, was now aggravated by fears for the safety of her infant.

CHAPTER II.

Πολλὰς αἰ ἔσθ' ἐν τοῖς μυχθαῖς γυνὴ γὰρ ἔσθ'.

EURIPIDES ANDROMACHE.

Merciful Heaven ! why dwells not in a face,
 Some mark the hidden bosom to reveal,
 That we might know the generous from the base,
 From eye, or forehead, stamp'd with nature's seal ?
 For all the secret virtues we may trace,
 Of root, or herb, or gold, or temper'd steel ;
 And safe amid the flocks we roam, but fly
 The glare of tigers, or hyæna's eye.

BLAND'S SLAVES OF CYTHERA.

MOST correctly founded were the suspicions of the Lady Isabella. The anonymous accusations against her husband had originated in Lord Rupert; and when that attempt had failed, his emissaries had contrived that the attendants of Earl Henry de Montresor should be scattered, and had employed other means for his destruction. Not that a deed of such com-

plicated iniquity was the natural offspring of the mind of Rupert. His soul was not of that constant temper which is capable either of egregious vice or virtue. He had generally a disinclination to exertion, he was by nature, perhaps, more than commonly solicitous of ease, and readily betrayed into the soft captivity of pleasure : but ill was not the original character of his mind. He was pliable, but not prone to evil. His spirit would reflect the darkness that approached it, but in a brighter presence it had shewn as fair an image as the object to which it was opposed. It now animated a second Cain, while there existed a malignant being near, to imbue it with her dark suggestions ; but in the infancy of creation, it had never teemed with self-existent malice, but had bowed with Abel at the favoured altar, and willingly yielded to his superiority.

Under the skilful direction of his wife Philippa, his weakness was to him in the place of passion. By perpetually painting to his view

his present dependent state, and the proud elevation which would be obtained, should his brother and his nephew be collected among the dead, she habituated his mind to meditate their loss. There was at first no dream of actual crime connected with the thought; it was a mere barren speculation of avarice, a remote contingency on which he might innocently reflect, and picture the advantages, and indulge the imaginary application of them. But still he would ever turn away from the dangerous conceit, by recalling his affection for his brother, and by uttering some hurried exclamation of his contempt for riches or distinction, in comparison with the life of Henry. But the longer he yielded to these golden visions of his greatness, that preference gradually faded. Wealth assumed a higher place in his estimation, and the kindlier affections yielded. When he thought of his brother and his tomb, very little melancholy mingled with the anticipation of the pompous sables of his interment.

While Philippa disposed the circumstances that begot occasion of these unhallowed musings, not a word or look betrayed her sympathy with his forbidden aspirations. She directed the mind, but she concealed her agency; and when the inclination was awakened, and the wish expressed, she reluctantly conceded to her will, and hesitated, with apparent coldness, to avail herself of the most cherished objects of her hopes.

From thinking of the natural death of his brother and his nephew, Lord Rupert began to recollect the slowness of its operation, and to become impatient of its delay.—“There were other means.”—When his mind whispered this suggestion to his heart, in the silence of a winter’s night, his conscience started as if a fiend had spoken sensibly beside him—his whole soul shrunk with horror from the deed:—“and yet such an act was sanctioned by fair precedents.”—Either rumour bitterly belied him, or Lambrook of Clorne was not the heir of his

elder brother's fortunes without a stratagem that aided his ambition. Was the affair feasible? It had been done—it might be done again. It was hinted darkly to Philippa—this was the point she had laboured to arrive at—all was now effected. The thought was uttered by her husband. It had apparently originated in him, and her subtilty was responsible for the after consequences. It has been told how Henry was accused, and was acquitted—how he triumphed, and was subdued.

The schemes of Philippa had no sooner been employed for the destruction of his brother, than the weakness and irresolution of Lord Rupert again returned. His conscience reproached him bitterly for the deed, and the midnight stillness of his chamber was become a rack and torment to him. It was in vain Philippa urged the death of his infant nephew; in vain she pointed out to him that all which he had done was ineffectual, unless the boy fell also. Her words were no longer potent to his

ear. Her arguments had for a time diminished in their efficacy. They were counteracted by another power. The terrors of his guilty conscience had usurped an absolute dominion over his ambition. The highest refinement of deceit, seemed now requisite to restore the evil bias of his mind; but Philippa had skill sufficient to overcome greater obstacles, than those which were opposed to her designs by the unsteady character of her husband.

“Superstitious fears are not religion,” said Philippa to herself; “and by the dread of real evils these visionary terrors may be overpowered. His hesitation, methinks, originates rather in the apprehension of discovery, than in any lingering prejudices of virtue.”

Amid the several varieties of dissipation now newly admitted into the castle of Montresor, the stimulating interests of the gaming table were necessarily a part. It is the natural refuge of the mind, which, accustomed to the strong excitements of the military life, feels

impatient of the tranquillity of peace. For Lord Rupert it had other sources of attraction—it withdrew his imagination from the past; and all the day, which was not appropriated to the banquet or the tournament, was passed with a young Norman knight, Sir Hervé de Valmacourt, in the pursuit of this destructive occupation. The match was not fair between them; Sir Hervé united to the light vivacity of his nation a deep penetration to discover, and skill to profit by the weakness of his adversary. Lord Rupert lost abundantly. This the Lady Philippa daily observed; but the time was not yet arrived for her to remark upon their losses. Ruin was her hope. Her brow clouded with every accidental beam of better fortune, and brightened with the return of his ill success. Every loss advanced the object of her wishes; and she anxiously waited for the time when he might have sufficiently entangled himself in difficulties; how to profit by those difficulties, her plans were already meditated and arranged.

Such were the views of the Lady Philippa, when one evening, after staking higher and higher, and perpetually losing, she perceived her lord with a desperate impetuosity double the stake, and lose!—treble it, and lose again!—and with a countenance pale as death, and convulsed with passion, burst violently from the apartment. The guests, astonished at his abrupt departure, anxiously collected around Philippa to enquire the cause of so extraordinary an event. But as she waved the question by attributing the action to some paroxysm of pain, all alarm was quieted by her apparent composure, and they severally resumed their occupations.

Philippa did not immediately follow the footsteps of her lord: she had witnessed the whole transaction between him and Sir Hervé de Valmacourt, and knew that he had lost a sum far superior to any wealth that he ever had possessed. She left him for a time to brood in solitude over his ill chances, before she approached to mould him to her purposes.

“Let his own mind commence the work,” said Philippa to herself; “I will come in time to accelerate the completion.”—She found him in his chamber, seated in darkness, and alone, opposite a lofty window; his head was rested on his hand, and his eyes were fixed unconsciously upon the stars, which were glittering in the firmament before him. So absorbed was he in the painful sense of his imprudence, and the violent self-accusations of the hour, that he heard not the step of Philippa as she approached; and the lamp she bore, agitated by the current of air as she moved hastily along the gallery, did not afford sufficient light to admonish him of her presence, till she stopped beside the seat on which he sat. The flame then suddenly resumed its brilliancy: Rupert awakened from his dream of self-reproach by the unexpected presence of the light beside him, started from his chair, and beholding Philippa—the last person, perhaps, whom at that moment he was desirous of seeing—he exclaimed in violent agitation, and with a hur-

ried waving of the arm, "Leave me, I implore you—leave me, Philippa."

"Leave you, Rupert? This is not like yourself. You would never send her from you, who has been conducted towards you by her affection. I observed your abrupt departure from the hall, and with the haste of solicitous love, have sought you to inquire the cause. I feared—"

"Whatever your fears may be," interrupted Rupert, "never can they equal the miseries of this dreadful moment."

"You are so very ill?"

"Ill!—aye, as ill as beggary can make me: I am ruined, Philippa; I am ruined, degraded, and undone!—the possessions which I inherited from my forefathers, are lost to De Valma-court—lost at play."

"O heavens, Rupert!—this is what I feared—but worse than what I feared: have you then been so far deluded, so idly captivated by this ruinous infatuation, as to forget the in-

terests of your family and yourself; and in one short moment—but I, Rupert, who shall be first to feel the bitter fruits of your folly, will be the last to chide them—your grief is sufficient, without my adding useless upbraidings. Though *your* domain is gone, let the Norman have them; my dowry still remains to us. Never till this moment did I lament the littleness of its value: on that we must retire. If not equal to the splendour of our birth, it will suffice for all the necessities of life, and we must lower our pride, my Rupert, and learn philosophy perforce, and be contented humbly.”

“ No, no, Philippa, there also—that dowry—there is no hope there. That is—” He hesitated to proceed—

Philippa continued, “ That is also lost to us. This is bad indeed; but still we are not wholly destitute. In these jewels we have yet one resource, and on them we must rely,” Here the lady raised a costly coronet from her head, and held it towards her husband—“ these

jewels were my mother's—I *did* promise to keep them for her sake, and to hand them down to my children, that they might wear them after me. Dear sainted spirit of my parent! forgive me that I violate that promise. I yield them to the necessities of a husband—and pardon me, mother, if I err in the opposition of my duties."

Lord Rupert made no answer, but turned aside, evidently affected, motioning with his hand as if they also would be ineffectual. The Lady Philippa understood the sign, and replacing the coronet on her head, said, "If you are indeed fallen so low, I cannot by any sacrifice of my own possessions alleviate your distress. But by my counsel, if you have courage enough to follow a woman's counsel, I can disclose a way, by which you may not only repay De Valmacourt, but in all future time possess wealth far superior to the youngest brother's portion, which you have lately so idly dissipated."

"How! how! teach me but the way, and I'll undergo any labour to obtain it."

"The labour is but slight—a word of yours, and—"

"A word!—"

"Aye, Death!"—and the Lady Philippa laid her hand upon his arm.

"Death!" repeated Lord Rupert, shuddering, and casting his eyes fearfully on her—

"Death, said you, Philippa?"

"Yes—your nephew!"

The Lord Rupert started at the idea. The lamp which she held flung its light full upon his wife, and displayed to his view a countenance of firm and diabolical resolution. He felt a terror, a painful terror, as he looked upon her. Philippa perceiving what was passing in his mind, and turning the light from her face, lest the influence of her beauty should be diminished by the present dark expression of her features, eagerly continued, "I have offered, Rupert, to make a sacrifice of all that

I possess, to incur even beggary, for your assistance. There is another way; and nothing now remains for you, but to attend to my counsel, of which honor, wealth, and title, follow as the consequences."

"O never, never, Philippa—do I not already know the curse of murder? before I knew that dreadful deed, wife—ever detested be the passion that prompted it—I slept as quietly on my couch as does the innocent infant on its mother's knee. The dreams of my slumbers were pleasant as the morning's visions of happiness and youth; and I feared not to wander e'en beneath the pale moon's eye at the very hour of midnight, alone, in the dark still forests. But now—my couch is torment to me—my dreams bear horrors in them, worse than holy friars preach of purgatory. If I perchance wander alone in the summer's evening, in every passing shadow my brother's corse seems to rise before me, while the winds whistling around

my head, come laden with his shrieks. Oh wife, wife! how cowardly is guilt!

“How cowardly, indeed,” answered Philippa, with a smile of contemptuous derision, “when it can make a *man* like Rupert fear the shadows of the forests, and the whistling of the evening wind.”

Lord Rupert looked abashed. That smile was powerful against his virtuous emotions, and Philippa continued—“But you, who are the victim of these unsubstantial terrors, who can thus timidly bow the head before the dreams of the fancy—the coward fugitive from winds and shadows—doubtless you will find your resolution most admirably nerved to endure the substantial ills of poverty and want, when they assail you!”

“By heavens, I would rather be the meanest hind that beggary can make me, than again suffer what I have suffered.”

“Know you what you say? I know not;

Rupert—my observations may have erred ; but I had conceived my husband not so entirely careless of the delicacies of life. But, doubtless, sorrow has untaught the lessons in which pleasure had instructed you. Priests tell us, that calamity is a potent medicine for the worldly spirit, and we shall see how wonderfully well your newly-elevated saintship will support the scoff and jest of those who were your fellows, and bear to be the slave, where, in your less holy days, you were contented to be the master.”

“ O do not, do not mock me thus, Philippa.”

“ I do not mock you, Rupert. Surely your courage does not fail and tremble at the *mention* of the ills which you were but now so resolute to bear.”

“ Alas ! Philippa, to one like me, bred up to all the delicacies of life, poverty is a fearful thing, and with limbs unused to labour—but then—Oh ! wife, to sacrifice our hopes in a hereafter—”

“Nay,” interrupted the Lady Philippa—
“all our hopes of heaven are sacrificed already. We are plunged so far in guilt, that to us there can be no forgiveness: and shall we by our own tame yielding lose all happiness before, as well as after death? This world we must make our heaven; drowning all remembrance of another, we must look upon our death, but as an endless sleep—upon the grave as the noiseless tenement of our repose. One simple and momentous act conducts us to all that we can wish for here; and shall we idly hesitate in its accomplishment, because haply there are dreams that may haunt the marble slumbers of our monuments?”

“But need he die? cannot he be privily concealed?”

“Aye, if you will have it so; but he were safer dead.”

“No, say not death—I shall feel happier, far happier, wife, knowing that I am not a double murderer.”

“ Well, well, as you desire. It is for you I act and speak. As you decide, so shall it be performed. To-morrow we will consult Father Walter on this business; but now let us hasten to the hall; assume your composure; be firm; be cautious.” Saying this, she re-conducted him to the guests.

CHAPTER III.

Forgive me, Heaven! yet, yet the tears will flow
To think how soon my scene of bliss is past!
My budding joys just promising to blow
All nipt, and withered by one envious blast!
My hours that laughing went to fleet away,
Move heavily along.

SHAW'S MONODY.

LORD RUPERT, deeply impressed with horror of the deed to which he had that moment been drawn in as an accessory, under the pretence of indisposition indulged his melancholy in silence. But Philippa, well skilled in the arts of deception, joined in the hilarity of the place, as though her mind was wholly engrossed by the pleasures of the time, continually turning aside from the present occupation, to trifle with the beautiful boy against whom she had been so wickedly contriving.

The child, attached to her from the perpetual indulgence that she allowed him, hung upon her garment, and followed her ever as she moved around the hall, seeming to bestow upon her more of his affection than was excited by the melancholy fondness of his mother.

Isabella, as she gazed on Philippa, accompanied in every movement by her boy, while herself sat in misery and alone, a stranger among the guests who crowded her own halls, felt all the sense of her misfortunes, and casting a look of jealous affection towards her child, burst into tears. The boy saw the tears of his mother, and leaving his aunt, rushed towards her. Isabella received him with the fondest kisses; and pressing him eagerly in her arms, quitted the noisy festivities of the place, with which the sentiments of her mind so ill accorded, to indulge, accompanied by the orphan Emma, and her child, the feelings of sorrow, softened into melancholy by the powers of sympathy and affection.

When she had gained her apartments, she flung herself on a seat; and while the tears, which the innocent and fond caresses of her child rather aggravated than diminished, fell fast down her cheeks, she imprinted many hurried kisses on his face, and then looking up to heaven, exclaimed, "O Almighty Father! tear not this solace from me also; this last, only comfort of the widowed Isabella: I have been blest, more than woman ever was, in the affections of the noblest husband, and in the caresses of my infant boy: my husband has been torn from me; that loss was almost more than my poor brain could bear; but spare my child, lord, let me not be childless, as I am a widow."

"Dearest Isabella," said the gentle Emma, "do not, I entreat you, mourn thus; do not endeavour to recal to your remembrance, sorrows which you should rather use every method in your power to forget."

"To forget, Emma! Oh, who can drive from their remembrance griefs like mine? the whole

kingdom envied my happiness: mothers wished their daughters' fate to be like mine; and maidens desired a lot like Isabella's. Was I only raised so high, that my fate might seem more grievous? I could have borne with poverty, with labour, with any lesser sorrows, had you been left me, Henry; but without thee, so wise, so beautiful, so brave"—While Isabella thus recalled his perfections to her mind, the tears fell faster, and choked her utterance.

"He was indeed wise, beautiful, and brave: he was all that wife could love on earth, or mourn the loss of in the grave," said Emma, in a voice of sympathy; "but do not you, Isabella, sink under the weight of griefs which others have had the fortitude to bear."

"Nay, nay, others have not had the fortitude to bear the woes which I bear—my heart is ice, flint, adamant, or I should die beneath them."

"Are there no other widows?"

“Many, Emma; but none with grief like mine: every other widow can take her children by the hand, and lead them to the spot where the husband of her love lies sleeping in the grave: can there weep upon his tomb; clasp her arms round his cold monument, and teach the young and ardent spirits of her children to emulate the glory of their father's name. My boy, my boy, thy father has no grave! never shalt thou know where the bones of thy parent have decayed; but shalt, perchance, sport around the very spot, unknowingly, without a sigh to his memory, where his noble spirit fled, and where his gentle heart has become a clod of the valley.”

She again caressed her boy; and Emma, in the mildest words of persuasion, endeavoured to console her sorrow. The remembrance that her husband lay without a tomb—that she knew not where he lay, had taken full possession of her imagination, and she exclaimed, “the humblest widow of our vassals is happier

than I; for she, when the labours of the day are done, can wander forth, and strew flowers upon the lowly grave where all her hopes lie buried. Emma, they say that I am mad—oh, have I not enough to make me so?"

"Indeed, indeed, your lot is very wretched," said Emma, kissing the hand of Isabella, and dropping a tear on it as she spoke.

"Even to you it appears wretched; but you know not half its sorrows. You see me here a wretched widowed woman, surrounded by those who cannot distinguish between the various indications of insanity and sorrow. You see me little better than permitted to exist, in the very castle which I once commanded. But you cannot tell the fears which every moment prey upon the mind—the dread of weightier evils. My child, my child, Emma, never does a moment pass me, but I dread lest the machinations which proved fatal to his father, should be brought to work against his innocent and helpless head."

" But why, dearest lady, should you indulge such melancholy fears, when there exists not the slightest grounds for apprehension ?"

" Not to you, Emma ; but a mother perceives many things, which another, whose feelings are less interested, passes by unnoticed. I am the last on earth to accuse any one of sin, did not evidence, strong as conviction, give to my own mind certainty of the crime : but of fratricide, the first, the worst of murders, how long was I my hopes, and affections arguing against my reason, before I could fix such dreadful imputation on my Henry's brother and Philippa."

" And can you, do you believe that they instigated the horrid murder of your lord ?"

" Believe it ! does not every moment of their lives declare it—why else am I reported to be mad ? why are the old and trusty attendants of my lord dismissed the castle ? Emma, Philippa's ambition thirsts after the posses-

sions of my lord—one step has already been taken to obtain them: my child is now the only obstacle to oppose her purpose. His innocence will be no defence against their cruelty. There is no protection, no safety—he will be torn from me; and were he murdered before my very sight, it would drive me mad as I am reported; but his mother has no power to aid him.”

An attendant from the Lady Philippa now entered the chamber, to carry back the infant to the hall. The child, young as he was, and ignorant of the occasion of his mother's tears, seemed by nature interested in her sorrow; and refusing to accompany the attendant, clung around her neck, lavishing upon her the prodigal demonstrations of his infantine affection.

The attendant, though a man seemingly formed of nature's sternest clay, was softened by the scene before him, and fearing to insult the feelings of Isabella, said gently to Emma, “ the Lady Philippa desires that the Lord

Edward may be conducted to her. She fears lest in some moment of agitation, the Countess unintentionally should injure him."—This address, though spoken very lowly, did not escape the ears of Isabella, and she exclaimed, "injure my child! oh, would to heaven he had no injuries to fear but those of my inflicting!—then, my boy, thou shouldst live, and flourish in the world; and in some brighter day revenge the murder of thy father. Tell the Lady Philippa he *shall not* come. Tell her that I am the mother of the child, and we will not be parted." As she said this, the Lady Isabella rose from her seat with a renewed air of majesty and resolution, which sorrow had long expelled—her child was on her arm, and still fearful of being taken from her, clasped its arms about her neck.

The sentence was scarce uttered, when Philippa herself entered the apartment. Philippa frowned at the attendant, as she demanded why her orders were not executed. The man,

ignorant what excuse to plead, stood silent; and Isabella in answer for him said, "he saw my boy clinging to my breast; he saw the tears of love which I shed upon his head; he perceived, that in parting with my boy, I should be bereft of all that could now give solace to my cares; and rough as he is, he dared not rend asunder the ties that God has joined."

Philippa turned aside without replying, and motioned to the attendant to carry away the infant. The man refused to understand the signal; and Isabella continued, "There were hearts hard enough, Philippa, to work the destruction of my Henry. Philippa, you knew where to find them"—The lady shrunk a moment at the unexpected accusation—"But you cannot find a being so cruel as to tear a child from the arms of its mother."—Philippa quickly recovering from the confusion which the words of Isabella had at first excited, said in an assumed tone of the mildest pity, "Poor unfortunate, bewildered lady!"—

“No, no, I am not mad, Philippa—you report me so, to cast a more secure concealment about your crimes.—You have, alas! succeeded.—Were I now to proclaim them through the extended world, every ear is closed against my tale of accusation.”

Alas, poor lady! take the infant from her; she will in one of these violent deliriums destroy it else—most miserable! be the innocent murderer of her child”—

“I will not hurt him;” and as the attendant, really thinking the child in danger, endeavoured to take him from her, she said, while the boy clung to her, “You see he does not fear me—Oh no, Philippa, even so young, he knows instinctively the difference between a mother and a foe:—he knows who has been the canker and the blight to poison the fair flower of his mother’s peace:—my Lord and I, Philippa, were as two stately trees of the forest, of which one spread its branches wide around, and raised its lofty head proudly in the air;

the other, shaded from the heat, and defended from the storm, flourished happily beneath it.—The poor weak ivy at our feet craved piteously for our assistance—we lent our aid—it reached the summit of the taller and the stronger tree; and poisoned, O most ungrateful weed! the friendly plant which raised it.—Philippa, who is like that ivy?—The fellow tree, deprived of the branches which protected it from the storm”——

“O, take away the infant!”—eagerly interrupted the subtle Philippa, no longer able to sustain the torture inflicted by the words of Isabella—“take away the child:—the presence of her boy gives vigour to her malady.—Sir,” she cried to the attendant with a voice that would not be resisted—“Sir, my orders must be obeyed.”

Philippa and the attendant now succeeded in taking away the boy from the arms of his parent. It was in vain that Isabella asserted the perfect possession of her reason; the vio-

lence with which she pleaded, confirmed the attendant in the belief of her insanity; but as he executed the severe injunctions of his mistress, a tear of pity trembled in his eye. To Philippa all pleadings were in vain—she bore the boy away, and leaving Isabella's apartment, with a frown summoned Emma to follow her.

CHAPTER IV.

How canst thou renounce the boundless store
 Of charms which nature to her votary yields?
 The warbling woodland, the resounding shore,
 The pomp of groves, the garniture of fields;
 All that the genial ray of morning gilds,
 And all that echoes to the song of even;
 All that the mountain's sheltering bosom shields,
 And all the dread magnificence of heaven;
 O how canst thou renounce, and hope to be forgiven?
 * * * * *

These charms shall work thy soul's eternal health,
 And love, and gentleness, and joy impart.

BEATTIE'S MINSTREL.

OBLIGED to accompany the Lady Philippa from the chamber of the Countess de Montresor, Emma would not again return to the society of the hall, but immediately withdrew to her apartment. Her mind was agitated and depressed by the painful circumstances of which she had been the witness. To her Isabella had been a friend and mother. She was now her-

self weak and unprotected. Surrounded on every side by reflections that agonized, and apprehensions that appalled her, Emma acknowledged with an entire conviction, that the fears of Isabella for the safety of her child were reasonably founded. She had seen the passing paleness and the sudden start of Philippa, when the unexpected accusation fell upon her ear: she had marked the effort by which she smothered her emotion, and assumed an artificial calmness. She had noticed her solicitude to avail herself of the presumed derangement of Isabella, to cast suspicion on her words, and mislead the understanding of the domestic, who might otherwise have received them in their real import, and disseminated the imputation. "You have here no friend but myself, dear Isabella," said Emma, as she hastily paced her chamber—"You have here no friend but the poor orphan, who owes every thing of her earthly happiness to you and to the late Lord of Montresor.—Aid me, Heaven!—under thy powerful direction the simplest objects

have sometimes been the means of mightiest operations.—Goliath fell by the sling of the stripling;—and by thy assistance, and by thy protection, the humble Emma, in her weakness and her gratitude, may be more than an equivalent to the power and the crime of the oppressors of her friend.—Here I vow myself, Isabella, the defender of thy infant.—I will be to him what thou in infancy wert to me.”

As in the fervour of her affection this lofty imagination burst upon her mind, she could not descend from the elevation of her sentiments to meditate the difficulties, the impossibilities of her project. She was in that state of high-wrought feeling, in which the soul sports with the thoughts of danger, as with things of inconsiderable regard; and the enthusiasm of virtue longs to make manifest its existence in some act of more magnificent self-devotion. She no longer doubted the purposes of Rupert and Philippa. Of the menials of the castle, she knew that the old domestics of

the family had been long removed, and that their successors were not of a nature to hesitate in their obedience to any instruction of their master, if the pay were proportioned to the compliance. And of the guests—so unlike to those who in Earl Henry's time had done honour to the halls of Montresor—there was an unrestrained libertinism in their habitual conversation—a disregard for every thing that was raised above the narrow views of ordinary conduct—a contemptuous rejection of every principle of morals and of action that did not originate in self, and tend to the gratification of self-interest, that Emma had long learnt to invent occasions of avoiding their society, and felt, that among them there would be little probability of encountering either sympathy or assistance.

“Who is there of that libertine association,” said Emma to herself, as their countenances occurred rapidly to her recollection, “who is there among them but would act like Rupert,

if placed in the circumstances of Rupert—but would estimate an infant's murder and a widow's tears as trifles, in comparison with the splendid consequences to which they promise to conduct."

Devoid as she was of any immediate means of succour, Emma's heart acknowledged a feeling of self-approval derived from her resolution, that tranquillized and consoled her; and offering up her prayers to the Almighty for his assistance, she retired to those slumbers, of which nothing but the pains of sickness, or the consciousness of guilt, can dispossess the chambers of the young.

The last thoughts of her waking imagination were still present to her sleeping fancy; not arrayed in terrific visions to alarm, but in gentle dreams, which she hailed as the predictions of her success. The song of the lark aroused her from her couch, and now for the first time, the momentary enthusiasm in which it was conceived having flown, the difficulties attend-

ing the performance of her heroic purposes began to make their impression on her mind. She had appointed herself guardian to a child surrounded by danger, and in the power of enemies, whose interest required his death; and in whose minds, independent of every restraint of religion or of morality, self-interest was the only motive. But unawed by these obstacles, which to another, possessing less mental constancy than Emma, would have appeared insurmountable, she determined to prosecute her attempts for the safety of the boy, remembering that success would ensure happiness to Isabella.

In deep meditation on the means to be pursued, she seated herself at the window of her apartment. The prospect before her, glowing with the brilliant splendour of the newly-risen sun, seemed doubly beautiful. The gentle rippling of the distant ocean, lightly agitated by the breezes of the morning, glittered to the sunbeams; and immediately beneath, for

Emma's apartment was situated high on the western tower, she looked down upon the extensive forests, now richly variegated with the yellow tints of autumn. All creation seemed to live in beauty, and to be instinct with joy. The martin, which, secure from injury by her protection, built his little nest annually above her window, was now in many a mazy circle skimming around the casement; the lark, the harbinger of the morning, soaring far aloft, even above the towers of Montresor, was caroling his matins to the sun; and the horn of the harvest-man, and the many voices of the labourers, borne indistinctly from afar upon the breath of the morning, fell upon her ear in notes of laughter and of song, and appeared, in expressions of delight, to interpret to the hilarity of nature. In the remoter distance, where beneath the brightness of the rising day, the ocean rippled in its immeasurable fields of splendour, was seen the white sail of the distant mariner, while the sea-birds, now glittering in

the sunbeams, and now descending in their flight, laved the white wing in the waters.

Emma's soul, as she gazed upon the scene, was elevated with the sublimest spirit of devotion:—it was the devotion of nature, superior to all earthly system, and independent of every earthly ordinance or limitation;—it was felt in a quicker pulsation of the heart, and a brighter glow of the imagination.—It was the immortal life within her breast making known the conviction of its existence, by an aspiration too lofty for definition, and too refined for human analysis.—The saint, in the fervour of his piety, has hailed such moments of spiritual elation as the antipasts of his reception into mercy: they have mingled with the rude emotions of the uncultivated man, when, wild in woods, his savage soul has shrunk amid the solitudes around him, with the vague conceptions of divinity, or soared for a little moment above the narrow interests of the earth, to acknowledge a superior destination.

Emma's devotion was neither expressed in words of prayer, or of praise; for she felt ashamed to ask more of that gracious Being, whose unpetitioned bounty had already given so much; and to return praises for his gifts, Emma felt, that by any words of hers it were impossible to praise them.—But she clasped her hands together; cast a rapid glance upon the beauties around her; turned her eyes towards Heaven, and a tear of gratitude stood trembling on either eye-lid.

The God who penetrates the inmost recesses of our hearts, shall receive that tear before all the proud masses, and splendid offerings, which superstition proffers at his altar; shall acknowledge that tear, and the tears of those whose hearts are like thine, gentle Emma, as the dearest incense which the children of men can offer to their Creator.

Emma felt that it was received; bowed her head humbly before her God; and the warm tear trickled down her cheek.

Oh! how wonderful it is, thought Emma, that any human being, whose eyes are open to the fair varieties of creation, while every gale that blows, and every leaf of the forest which is shaken by it, speak the power of a living God, should dare, for the paltry acquisition of a title, and a name, to harbour sin within his mind, and perpetrate a deed, which must offend for ever.—O Rupert, and Philippa, how the poor orphan Emma from her soul pities you!—Are you mad, that, to attract the idle envy of your fellow-men, you barter all real good and solid happiness in the pursuit of power and of wealth! When you have waded through murder to your greatness, then only will you have learnt, that to be *envied* is not to be happy:—the warder or the midnight watch, as he whistles through the long dark hour, will envy the repose, and as he may ignorantly deem, the careless splendour of his lord; but that sleepless, miserable, envied man, while he hears the warder's cheerly whistle, how often will he mourn the

own estate! how readily would
by pageantry to obtain a spirit
ed by the remembrances of guilt!

As these reflections were passing in the
mind of Emma, the Lady Isabella, violently
agitated, entered her apartment; and flinging
herself on her knees before her, grasped both
her hands between hers, and hid her head
weeping in her lap. Her astonished friend
eagerly demanded the occasion of her alarm.
The Lady Isabella no sooner heard the question,
than starting up with the marks of terror vi-
sibly portrayed on her countenance, she ex-
claimed—"Ask you why I am alarmed? O
Emma, they are now plotting the murder of my
boy—I know, I know they are—the horrid three
are in Rupert's apartment—"

"Dearest Isabella, do not speak, and look
so wildly—tell me, who are in the apartment
of Lord Rupert?"

"Philippa and Rupert are there, and the
Monk Walter has this instant joined them; I

met him in the gallery.—I know they are contriving against the life of my child.”

“ Oh think not so, my dearest friend ; that pious holy man is rather to be considered as a safeguard, than an object of suspicion.”

“ He a safeguard ! rather the instrument of fratricide, himself the perpetrator of the deeds which Rupert plans.—Was he not daily here closeted with Philippa, previous to the accusations laid against my lord ?—O little thought I, Emma, that two so seeming holy could be so very, very wicked ;—and again, the night before my Henry’s expected return, were they not all three secretly counselling for hours,—and was not Henry murdered ?”—

“ But is this sufficient cause of suspicion and alarm ?—these events might have occurred.—”

“ No, no,” interrupted Isabella, “ this is sufficient cause : and now the guardian of my boy, that murderous man, is ruined, has lost all that he possessed to the Norman de Valma-court.”

“Are you sure of this?”

“I know it certainly—my eyes cannot be deluded—to repay this debt my child must fall—and at the same time shall by his death make Rupert and Philippa possessors of Montresor.”

“Indeed, Isabella, I fear that you have cause for terror.”

“O Henry, Henry!”—exclaimed Isabella, without regarding the words of Emma—“had we been but vassals where we have commanded, I had still been happy, beloved and beloved with you, and with my child; and not the widowed miserable thing I now am.”

“O cease those lamentations, dearest lady,” said Emma soothingly; “do not, by calling to your remembrance the evils which are passed, enervate your mind at the time your courage and resolution are most wanted.—We must save the boy!”—

“Save him, Emma!”—

“Yes, I know that they are strong, and that

we are weak; that were we to tell our tale to the inhabitants of the castle, we should be scorned as maniacs; and our fears ridiculed as the ravings of delirium. But we have God and justice, right and virtue, on our side, and let us not be depressed, Isabella. I will go, and by some means discover the counsels of these three, that we may know how to counteract them."

"A mother's prayers be with you, Emma!" cried the injured lady.

"Go you, Isabella, to your chamber, and wait my return—lose not your courage—all will yet be well."

Saying this, Emma departed to discover the schemes of Philippa and Lord Rupert; and Isabella retired to her chamber, anxiously waiting every moment till she should hear some account of the success of her friend.

CHAPTER V.

Fas est et ab Hoste doreri.

OID'S MET.

REPULSIVE as it was to the mind of Emma to acquire a clandestine knowledge of the purposes of another, still, as the only means by which she could counteract the stratagems of the wicked, she was in the present case obliged to deviate from the line of conduct to which her principles directed, and discover some private method of obtaining information of the designs of Lord Rupert and Philippa. "The adversaries of the child," said Emma to herself, "employ not only deceit, but power against him; and may not I with impunity descend a little from the rigid severity of right, who have no other arms to exert in his defence, than those which are the attributes of

the weak—secrecy and precaution.” Thus saying, she stole gently along a passage leading into the anti-room of Lord Rupert’s apartment, and in which she could with sufficient accuracy and distinctness catch the conversation of those within.

The aged monk, on whose countenance was written in the deepest character, boldness and cunning, had already joined Lord Rupert and the Lady Philippa.—They were conversing on ordinary topics when Emma took possession of her station; and Philippa seemed considering within herself, how she might intimate to Walter the occasion of her summoning his attendance. Guilt has something so appalling in its nature, that those who do not hesitate to perform, will often fly to every subterfuge, even in the presence of their accessaries, to avoid the mention of their crimes; and will endeavour by every act of circumlocution, to make the partners of their guilt the first proposers of its commission. Such appeared to

be the desire of Philippa, when, after a pause of considerable length, during which she looked down from the lofty casement upon the wide domains of Montresor, she began in a tone of regret—"It is a melancholy sight, Father Walter, to mark the ruin which must inevitably fall on the fair possessions of Montresor.—You must perceive that the power of our house is failing.—Have you not heard, father, how the vassals openly complain, that there is now no arm to protect them, and no rightful commander to lead them to the field of victory?—The hands of my lord, guiding with a borrowed rule, are limited and restrained; he has all the odium of authority without its reverence—all the pains and reproaches of lordship without any of its dignity."

She paused, as if expecting the monk would answer; but he only placed his right hand upon his breast, and bowed assent.—"Is it not a grievous pity," she continued, "that the lord of a demesne like this, the possessor of a castle

so strong, and a vassalage so powerful, should, from the imbecility of youth, be unable to employ them?"—

She again paused—the monk bowed as before, and Philippa proceeded—"It will be long before this infant will have power to lift a sword, much less will he be enabled to brandish it in the field of battle; and during this time the poor demesne of Montresor—what will become of that, holy father?"

The monk still made no answer; and the lady, impatient of his silence, with a sudden feeling of irritation, and a flush upon her cheek, overcame with a violent exertion her repugnance to communicate more plainly, and with a look of harsh resolve, and with her lips half closed, continued:—"You affect not to understand me, father—this boy must be disposed of—you must take measures for the infant Lord of Montresor. Dost thou hear, Father Walter? He is a stumbling block in the way of Lord Rupert's honours."

"I dispose of him, lady! surely my holy office"—

"O hypocrisy!" interrupted the Lady Philippa—"your holy office is no obstacle; it has rather been a cloak to conceal innumerable crimes, than any impediment to their execution.—That cowl must yet veil the blushes of another iniquity; and then you may repent at leisure."

The man attempted not to deny the accusation of Philippa, but still he seemed under the operation of some secret motive, which rendered him solicitous of delivering the infant heir of Montresor from the destination that threatened him, and with his body bent in the attitude of humblest deference, he replied: "Lady, there are many reasons, besides those of a religious nature"—

"Religious!" exclaimed Philippa with a sneer.

"Pardon me," continued the monk, "if in your self-interest I discover the sufficient rea-

son for delaying this—this—I know not what to name it—this”—

“Crime!” added the undaunted woman; “speak plainly, for here are only friends—I can bear to hear the mention of the thing now, though at first, perhaps, I felt some symptoms of your heartlessness;—but go on—our interest”—

“Would forbid so sudden a perpetration.—They tell strange tales of the death of his father.—His spirit has been seen here in the forest, pale and in armour; his left arm wrapt in his mantle”—

“Who saw it?” exclaimed Rupert.

“No matter, no matter!” cried Philippa; “a truce with these dreams of the idle—to the purpose.”

“Were the boy to follow so soon in the same dark and mysterious passage by which his father has disappeared, might not the busy imaginations of the multitude haply connect the circumstances, and light upon too certain a suspicion.”

“ Who dares suspect us ? ” exclaimed Philippa—“ or what have we to dread from the opinion of others ? In the hovels of poverty, vice may crouch, and dread the scrutinizing eye, and tremble at the whispered insinuations of the many ; but in the castles of the great, Father, with wealth as her buckler, and power for her sword, she stands elevated on so lofty a pedestal, and maintains so terrible an attitude, that they, whose suspicions are most assured, will be awed into respect, and intimidated into silence.”

“ But your lord has already the command of the castle, as guardian to the child—might he not exercise that privilege as if the power were solely his ; and the child, so many evil chances continually surrounding him, by a death of nature, give you all, without the second perpetration of a crime so black as murder ? ”

Lord Rupert, who, with his constant indecision, hung aloof, irresolute how to act,—whether

to follow the path which the Lady Philippa pointed out, and to which his necessities strongly invited him, or to listen to the still remaining scruples of his conscience—now started at the word murder; and while the recollection of all the mental torments which he had suffered crowded quick upon his fancy, he cried, “I entreat you, Philippa, let it be as Father Walter counsels.”

“No, no,” replied the lady, “there must be no delay—Father, this boy must immediately be disposed of.”

“Not immediately,” replied the monk, endeavouring gently to remonstrate—“Let me dissuade you—remember, you are young and impetuous, lady, and that I am old, and have learnt caution.”

“And the caution of age,” said the Lady Philippa, with a smile of exultation, “is no more preferable to the impetuosity of youth, than is the feeble and tardy movement of the one, to the quick and firm tread of the other.

It must be as I would have it, Father, and you must privily dispatch this boy."

"Not kill him," said Lord Rupert—"you promised that he should not die, Philippa."

"Well, well, he shall not: all that shall be properly provided for—but, Father, you must send some persons of confidence to the castle, to bear away the child to a place of safety: mark me—of safety, Father—my lord will have it so."—The monk bowed his head in token of submission.—"And, Father, as the Sons of Song are least liable to suspicion for deeds of evil, let your agents demand admission to the castle as wandering minstrels. You know the rest, Father. If you perform it not, as I have spoken, but let that visionary thing, called Conscience, interpose between you and your office, remember you will have a bitter enemy to fear in one, whom obedience may secure as no inconsiderable patron. Your way lies there"—pointing to a door—"my lord and I go this way to the tournament."—As she

said this, Philippa waved her hand haughtily to the friar, who understood the signal, and departed; while she, stimulating Lord Rupert to persist in the plans proposed, led him on towards the door, near which Emma was concealed.

Emma, excluded from their sight only by the projection of a window, into which she had retired, trembled with apprehension as they approached. If either of them chanced to look behind, her discovery was certain; and her mind was not a little relieved on seeing the Lord Rupert and Philippa turn into the long passage, leading from the room in which she was so ill secreted.

Emma now determined to go to Isabella, and consult with her upon the means which were instantly to be adopted, as the loss of a single moment was become of the greatest consequence towards the preservation of the child. She delayed, therefore, no longer in the apartment, than she thought would allow

sufficient time for Rupert and Philippa to gain the end of the long passage, through which her own way led to Isabella's chamber. That passage branched off at the end into narrower avenues, conducting to the opposite extremities of the castle. If she could once gain that point unobserved, all fear of discovery would be at an end. Having waited, as she conceived, a sufficient time for the persecutors of the infant to have removed themselves entirely out of hearing of her footsteps, as she followed them, Emma at length ventured to quit her concealment—they passed onward secure of their success—she followed, hoping to defeat them. She went as lightly as possible, that no sound might give notice of her movement; as quickly as possible, for her wishes flew before her. As she was thus hastening along, whom should she meet at the door of the apartment, but the Lady Philippa herself.—Emma and Philippa were mutually disturbed at this sudden and unexpected meeting: the one feared lest all her

hopes for the preservation of the infant heir should, by this encounter, be completely frustrated; the other was no less alarmed for the detection of her designs.—Emma was the first to recover from her confusion, and so quickly, that it was scarcely perceived by the Lady Philippa, who, though pondering within herself the cause of the unexpected presence of Emma in that place, and the means by which she could have entered the apartment since herself and Rupert had left it, still would not, from a dread of awakening suspicion, enquire of the subject that was at the moment nearest to her mind; but said, after a pause, with a tone of perfect self-possession—"I am come purposely to seek you—we are nothing without your presence at the tilt in the castle-yard." Emma knew not what to do: she had left Isabella, tormented with all the anxiety of a mother, awaiting her return in her apartment; she was the only person in whom the slightest hopes of safety for the child remained; for she

was the only one, except his mother, who even *suspected* any danger; the only one who *knew*, with certainty, how very, very near at hand that danger was. Of this, so slight hope of life, the persecuted infant of Isabella seemed about to be deprived by the untimely summons of Philippa.—To refuse accompanying her, without any excuse to plead, was impossible: Emma perceived that it would instantly give birth to the suspicions which she was most desirous to elude; and to sit out the long tedious period of the tournament, when every moment was so precious, that the loss of it threatened death to the child, and consequent wretchedness to its mother and herself, was at all hazards to be avoided.—These thoughts passed rapidly in the mind of Emma, as she hesitated for an instant; considering what course to follow—it was but for an instant; before she had decided, Philippa had taken her by the arm, and was leading her away to the castle-yard.

CHAPTER VI.

Oh horrible!—you will not murder him!
Murder a harmless infant!

MISS BAILLIE'S FAMILY LEGEND.

THE preparations for the tournament had been conducted with all imaginable splendour, and the female guests, and other inhabitants of the castle, placed, according to their rank, on seats raised for the purpose, were collected together to witness the mimic warfare. The Lord Rupert presided as judge of the lists; and the Lady Philippa, arrayed in all the pomp of high baronial dignity, sat beneath a canopy, richly embroidered, ever ready with her smiles to congratulate the conqueror, or to cheer the sinking spirits of the fallen.

But on the senses of Emma this splendid pageantry made not the slightest impression:

her mind was fixed solely on Isabella, and was either absorbed in the contemplation of her anxiety and distress, or in forming various schemes for the deliverance of her infant. Philippa had promised that the boy should not be destroyed: but, from Emma's knowledge of her character, she was perfectly convinced of the fallacy of those promises; and felt fully assured that the deeply-rooted ambition of that imperious woman would never permit a being to exist on earth, whom chance might some day bring forth from his concealment, and exalt as a powerful opponent to her greatness.

The more Emma considered the manner in which she ought to act, so much the more impossible the preservation of the boy appeared. In his favour were only Isabella, and herself; against him, the whole power of the castle. Whatever plan she laid, something instantly occurred to her imagination, which shewed it to be impracticable.—Every moment increased her agitation;—the tournament seemed pro-

tracted to an unusual, and agonizing length, and she had yet concluded on no purpose. Her mind became confused; and her conceptions indistinct and mingled; but when she perceived the sun declining towards the west, and called to mind the little interval allowed for performing all that was necessary to the protection of the infant, the recollection so completely hurried her, that fearing to allow too much of time, so precious, to the consideration of a plan that might at last be found defective—one scheme after another hastily occurred, and was as hastily rejected, till despair nearly took possession of her faculties.

While the mind of Emma was in this state of agonizing embarrassment, she observed not what was going on in the ring before her; nor perceived that Sir Hervé de Valmacourt, having twice subdued his opponent, had been declared the victor of the day, and was standing before her to present the prize of conquest, which he

had obtained. The loud applauses of the spectators at length aroused her, and recalled her wandering attention to the scene; but finding that the jousts were ended, slightly waving from her the offerings of Sir Hervé, she rose suddenly from her seat, and hastened towards the apartments of Isabella.

The loftiest turrets of the castle were tinged with the last rays of the setting sun before the tournament concluded; and when Emma hurried along the battlements, it had already sunk below the horizon. The western sky was glowing with the warmest tints of evening. The whole distance shone with a golden splendour: a few light clouds, tinged beautifully with those nameless and varying hues of heaven, which the imitative art of man has in vain laboured to represent, sloped downwards towards the horizon; as if, following the sun in his decline, they hastened in another hemisphere, to become the gay attendants of the morning. The bright glory of the west, gradually fading away,

mingled towards the east with the calm grey of the approaching twilight.

Emma ran fleetly along the walls, rejoicing in her escape, and eager, by her haste, to preclude all possibility of being again delayed from the presence of Isabella. As her light airy figure flitted athwart the vast and gloomy battlements of Montresor, and her thin drapery floated, as she past, on the breezes of the evening—while both the battlements and her fine form appeared expressed in deepest shadow against the radiant splendours of the western sky—the enthusiast might have gazed, and fancied her the protecting genius of the place. Sir Hervé de Valmacourt watched her as she fled, and hastened to pursue. The knight reached her while she was yet upon the walls, in her way towards the tower in which Isabella's apartments were situated. Seizing her hand as she endeavoured to avoid him, he exclaimed, "How have I offended you, beautiful Emma, that you will not deign even to cast a look of condescension

on the being who adores you? Have I deserved such treatment, gentle lady?"—"O do not stop me," cried Emma—"indeed this is no time for trifling—"

"I had hoped," continued De Valmacourt, disregarding the impatience of Emma—"I had hoped that your beauty would have smiled upon the knight who had boldly declared, and by conquest proved, the supremacy of your charms above the other fair dames of the castle."

Emma heard him not, but endeavoured to disengage her hand, continually exclaiming, "Pray let me go!—for Heaven's sake do not detain me!"

"What! without one word of acknowledgement!—without one kind look!—without even a single token of pity for a heart that bleeds for you?"

"Indeed, indeed, I must go!" cried Emma, her impatience increasing with her delay—"I must not be detained."

"Unfortunate, ~~that~~ I am!" exclaimed De Valmaceart; in a voice of courtly expostulation—"other maids; fair lady, are proud of the knights whose victories proclaim the triumph of their beauty; and must I alone, the most miserable in the rolls of chivalry, contend without a hope to cheer me, and conquer without a smile for my reward?—At least look kindly on me, Lady Emma; thank me for my love, though your cruelty refuses to return it."

"O, thank you, thank you!" said Emma—"and now prevent my passage no longer.—The Lady Isabella expects me—the fate of her infant hangs on my delay—her child will"—she corrected herself instantly, alarmed at the thoughtless manner by which she had nearly discovered her knowledge of the plans of Philippa to a perfect stranger. But Sir Hervé had marked her broken sentence, and eagerly enquired:

"What of the Lady Isabella's infant? what is to be apprehended?"

"O nothing, nothing to be apprehended," answered the lady quickly;—"but he will be impatient till I come to him."

"And is his impatience then alone to be considered? And will you, to enhance the pleasure of a child, whose whole life is an endless circle of enjoyment, careless of evil, ignorant of wrong—fly from me, who live but in your presence, and to whom your every look of gentleness or of severity, is a sentence of happiness or despair?"

Emma made no answer. Sir Hervé still firmly held her hand, and, opposing her progress, continued to pour forth his protestations of love, and remonstrances against her cruelty. But suddenly a sound caught her ear, which, by reminding her more forcibly of the necessity of haste, gave her fresh strength to resist De Valmacourt's endeavours to retard her: she heard the sounds of harping beneath the walls of the castle, and then the voices of minstrel, joining with the melody of the instruments, re-

quiring the boon of rest and lodgment. How sweet would it have been at any other time, in such a place, at such an hour, to have listened to the deep and mellow notes of such high minstrelsy! It came not to the ear like the noisy songs of revel, and of riot; but in a swell of low and holy harmony, mingling in soft cadence with the melancholy stillness of the time: the sound removed the silence, without disturbing the tranquillity of eve. Emma snatched away her hand, for she knew that these must be the commissioned murderers of the child. She attempted to fly; but the knight, anticipating her purpose, baffled her attempt, and cried, "Surely, lady, in a time like this, when notes, which seem rather such as angels sing, than the tutored breathings of human melody, are stealing upon the ear, the heart must be attuned to pity and to love, and vibrate in harmonious unison with the strains of the minstrel, and with the holy calmness of nature—can you then, even yet unsoftened,

retain your accustomed coldness?—Can you still refuse to smile upon my love?—O, hark to that dying fall! how sweet! how beautiful!”—

“It is the knell of death!” interrupted Emma, nearly frantic with impatience—“O let me fly to save him!”

Sir Hervé, astonished at the exclamation, eagerly enquired its meaning; and Emma was on the point of discovering to him the schemes of Philippa and Lord Rupert, trusting to his honour, and the oath of his knighthood, to assist her in the defence of the infant child of the widowed Isabella, when an attendant came to summon them to the banquet.

Sir Hervé—notwithstanding his desire of knowing what could have given rise to the sudden ejaculation which he had just heard; and astonished at the evident disquietude under which Emma, during the whole period of their interview, had so evidently laboured, but which he had before attributed to some feelings of caprice, or feminine coquetry—instantly followed the at-

tendant. Vanity was the ruling passion of the young De Valmacourt, and he hastened to the hall, more eager to receive the applauses awaiting him as the victorious combatant in the tournament, than curious to enquire after the cause of Emma's agitation.

Emma was now left totally at liberty to go in pursuit of Isabella; and, rejoiced at having at length escaped from the troublesome solicitations of Sir Hervé, she flew, rather than ran, towards the apartment of her expectant friend. What was to be done to save the boy she knew not; no plan was arranged; no person on whom they could depend was present. The time, in which preparations ought to have been made, she had lost, unavoidably lost, during the tournament; and afterwards, the few short moments that were left had been rendered useless by Sir Hervé de Valmacourt. Still Emma, amid her anxiety and regret, derived a consolation from having been prevented discovering to the Norman knight the wicked purposes

of the Lord Rupert and Philippa; for she now remembered, that the destruction of the boy was involved with circumstances not wholly disadvantageous to Sir Hervé.—It was to him that the gaming debts of the Lord Rupert were owing.—And if she could but see Isabella, she yet hoped that her mind might furnish some project for the child's deliverance, or think upon some person who would have virtue enough existing, even within the now licentious walls of Montresor, to defend the persecuted and the helpless. Such were the hopes of the gentle Emma, as she hastened towards the apartments of Isabella, and in which she doubted not to meet her; but having reached it, her grief and her surprize were equally excited, at finding that the mother and the boy were no longer there.

Emma flung herself on a seat in an agony of sorrow—her last, her very last hope had failed; and nothing now remained for her, but to await in silence the completion of Philippa's crimes;

an innocent accessory to the destruction of the infant whom she was powerless to save. She could not imagine whither the Lady Isabella had gone, or why she should have left the apartment. The deep and contending emotions of the mind of Emma overcame her, and she burst into tears. These lasted not long, for, from a sudden impulse of convulsive resolution, she determined patiently to await the end; ready, if chance offered any opportunity of deliverance, to take instant advantage of it, and rising from her seat, she departed to join the banquet.

CHAPTER VII.

—— Strike up, my master;
 But touch the strings with a religious softness!
 Teach sounds to languish through the night's dull ear,
 Till Melancholy start from off her couch,
 And Carelessness grow convert to Attention.

SUPPOSED TO BE SHAKSPEARE'S.

WHEN Emma entered the hall, the guests were all seated; and the first objects that met her eye were the Lady Isabella, and her child sitting beside her. Isabella looked at her boy, and then cast a mournfully reproachful glance on Emma. Emma perceived the glance, and understood the full extent of its meaning; it spoke the torments which the wretched mother had endured from her delay: it accused her of a cruel breach of promise.—“You know not what I too have suffered,” thought Emma.—Her heart bled with anguish, as she looked

on the Countess de Montresor, and on her boy, and remembered that this was perhaps the very last time that they would meet; that a few hours might part them, never again to be united till the re-union of the grave.

The minstrels, three in number, having received admission at the gate, were seated in the midst of the hall, at a short distance from the banqueting table. They had begun to play in concert a sweet and martial melody before the Lady Emma entered; she cast a glance on them, as she walked along the hall towards the superior table; but quickly turned away her eyes in horror from men, who, she knew, cherished the thoughts of murder in their hearts; and who, without any impulse of deep passion to stimulate the act, could make their trade of blood, and set their price on the destruction of an innocent and defenceless infant.

There was no room for her near Isabella, and she was obliged to take her seat at the table near Sir Hervé de Valmacourt. This, at any

other time, would of itself have been to her a source of disquietude; for though there was that in the person of the knight, which might conciliate a favourable reception to his words, and though his wit was brilliant, and his admiration courted by the fairest guests of the castle; to Emma, whose imagination could never conceive any thing of merit in the companions and the friends of Rupert and Philippa, his very courtesy only rendered him the more obnoxious; and as far as possible, she ever avoided his society. But now she was so wholly absorbed in the contemplation of more weighty misfortunes, that the slighter ills made not the least impression; and Sir Hervé, his spirits more than usually elated by the successes of the morning, continued to pour forth his compliments and protestations, unheard or disregarded. De Valmacourt, attributing her silence to her unaccustomed attention, most joyfully persevered in relating the hourly pains which he underwent, and exaggerating

in good set phrase, the jealousies and the torments of his hopeless and unrequited love.

Emma heard the sound of his words playing around her ear, but her mind, intent on the sorrows of Isabella and the boy, collected not their sense.

The banquet was nearly concluded, when Philippa desired an attendant to command the minstrels to accompany their instruments with the voice. The elder minstrel waved his head in token of submission, and struck a few chords on his harp ere he began. He recalled the captivity of Richard the King, and the song of that faithful man who discovered his sovereign's prison place, and was the means of restoring him to liberty and light. Applause followed him as he sung, and rung loudly in the hall after he had concluded.

The second minstrel tuned his harp also, and poured forth the strain of unpremeditated song. He told the Wars in the Holy Land; and the deeds of those gallant knights who had

fallen in defence of the banner of the cross. All who were present joined in giving praises to his melody, for he told of names dear to their remembrance, of kindred, and of friends, who, in the field of battle, on the sultry plains of Palestine, had been numbered among the dead.

Sir Hervé de Valmacourt, who had hoped, from his morning's victory, to pass the day unrivalled in the admiration of the guests of the castle, excited by the animation consequent on success, was now determined to shew his skill alike in music as in arms; and, after the second minstrel had concluded his lay, himself seized a harp, and, having played a lively prelude, began the exhibition of his powers of minstrelsy.

It was a light lay, and beautifully worded; but, amid the many flowers of poesy with which it was brilliantly ornamented, there seemed a latent sense, a something more than met the ear; which called up a faint smile in

the faces of the knights, and tinged the female cheek with blushes, though the delicate mind was ignorant of the occasion of its shame. The applauses were loudly repeated when his song was ended; and the murmur of approbation rung long in the hall, after Sir Hervé, thinking it vain for any subsequent performance to expect applause, restored the harp to the third minstrel, whose property it was.

This minstrel was a tall, pale Scot; his dark eyes shone with the fire of poesy; and, though his sallow countenance was marked with sternness as De Valmacourt caroled his light ditty, it seemed rather expressive of the rigidity of virtue, than the apathetic severity of a frigid nature. He struck the instrument with a hand so masterly, that the strings seemed to have received new gifts of harmony. The murmur of applause which followed Sir Hervé's lay was instantly hushed, and the stillness of anxious expectation reigned throughout the hall. The other songs had passed, had been commended;

and Emma engaged in her own misery, heard not a single sound; but now, the first notes struck by this wondrous man aroused her from herself, and spite of her sorrows, commanded her attention. While she gazed on him, his eyes were cast towards heaven, as it were to receive the inspiration; and she wondered that one, whose countenance so beamed with the spirit of genius and of feeling, should possess a heart capable of the deed which he was prepared to perpetrate. She said to herself truly, "there is no art to judge the mind's formation by the face!"

Before this minstrel began to sing, the guests, who had so loudly applauded the light gay carol of Sir Hervé, struck by the grandeur of his prelude, felt ashamed of the admiration which they had so lightly squandered, and wished themselves the power of recalling it, that they might heap it as the meed of him, whose measure played not about the ear only, but struck upon the heart.

He sung the praises of Music and of Song. First, in a loud and martial measure, he described its power in the field of battle; to inspirit the fainting heart with valour; and told, how scattered and routed troops, afar on a distant shore, had been recalled to the attack, and found Victory where they had feared Disgrace, by a minstrel's striking some loved measure of their native land.

Then his voice gradually fell, a tear trembled in either eye; and, in a tone so low, that, but for the dead silence with which all listened to his song, his words had been scarce audible, he told the soothing powers of music to alleviate the woes of miserable man. Isabella, struck with the manner and the beauty of his minstrelsy, wept with admiration of the notes which met her ear.

Emma, as she looked upon the man and on the child, could scarcely conceive it possible, that one whose mind was so alive to the impulses of poetry, could for a moment bear a

thought of ill against such an infant. But how much greater was her astonishment, when, casting off his momentary depression, and assuming a tone of high poetio indignation, she heard him declaiming against those who prostitute the purposes of song, who make their heaven-sent inspiration the flatterer of vice, and the vassal of libertinism—who kindle the flames of passion by the brand stolen from the altar, and declaring that *he* would never awake a sound from his harp, that did not thrill in unison with the most hallowed emotions of the soul.

Emma could scarcely help exclaiming, “consummate hypocrite!” as she listened to the words, and called to mind the purpose of his presence; nor was this the only time, during his long, wild, melodious lay, in which she was impressed with the seeming incongruity between the sentiments of the bard and the nature of his commission, for, by an artfully contrived transition, he wandered from the praises of his art to the wretchedness of ambition,

when its victim, obdurate against the calls of conscience, and the yearnings of natural affection, wades through the blood of kindred to his greatness. As the minstrel uttered this, his full dark eye was fixed on Rupert, and, struck with the manner, Emma and Isabella, who knew how applicable the words and the action were, gazed in silent astonishment at each other. The Lord Rupert turned pale as death, and seemed frequently on the point of rushing from the apartment; but as often, a frown from the Lady Philippa restrained him. At length the minstrel ceased; but, long after the conclusion of his strains, the silence of attention still remained; it appeared as if the hearers loved to catch even the last dying echo of his quivering strings, or as if they failed in the fullness of their admiration to find any adequate expressions of their delight.

When his song was ended, the minstrel himself reclined his head upon his harp, alike careless of censure or of praise.

Sir Hervé de Valmacourt was the first to break the silence: his desire of shining the leading ornament of the banquet had been completely counteracted: his morning victories and his evening lay, were now alike forgotten in the enthusiasm excited by the minstrel; and as the only means of recalling the attention to himself, he endeavoured by the force of ridicule to cast contempt upon his rival.

To the knight's repeated sallies of wit, levelled either against his nation or himself, the man did not appear to deign the slightest attention; or sometimes, if a stroke of sarcasm occurred keener than the rest, he might perchance acknowledge it by a side-long glance of the eye, and a smile of supercilious derision. Sir Hervé suffered all the pain of ineffective wit, and severely felt, that in satire as in treason, "the attempt, without the deed, confounds us." But at length, baffled in all attempts to arouse the anger of the minstrel, or the ridicule of the

guests whom his melody had charmed, the knight, as a last resource, questioned him, "If he also, like other impostors of his nation, was gifted with second sight?"

The man, for the first time since the conclusion of his lay, raised his head from his harp; and looking with a frown at Sir Hervé, motioned with his hand, as if to check the freedom of his speech.

The knight still persisted in his enquiries, and, in a tone of sarcasm, said, "Come, come, don't be afraid—begin your conjurations; and, since you can see so deep, let us be benefited by your knowledge."

"No, no, no," said the minstrel, "I have nothing to tell that you could wish to hear."

"Then you could tell," exclaimed several of the guests—"Do, Lady Philippa, do, Lord Rupert, request him to speak"—

"She had better not!" cried the minstrel, and his dark eyes, which had before been seen melting into tears with the enthusiasms of poe-

try and music, now glared horribly with a spirit of less gentle inspiration. The curiosity of the guests was but the more aroused by this extraordinary elation of his countenance; and they continued their petition to Philippa.—She was alarmed;—there was an appearance altogether strange in the manner of the man;—she feared a revelation of her inmost soul;—she endeavoured to elude their request.

“It were better to forbear,” she replied—
“the man himself appears to object to so public an exposure of his powers of prophecy, or I should much desire to witness them.”

“Should you?” cried the minstrel; and his severe eye, turning full upon her, made her shrink within herself.

“Oh, you see he knows nothing,” said De Valmacourt, laughing scornfully;—“it is with him as with the rest of his nation, he would fain pretend to know all things, but keeps his wisdom to himself, for *our good*, forsooth.—For my part, I am not superstitious; the tales

which are told, are all deception; and this good friend of ours"—

"Does not *deceive!*" interrupted the minstrel with a loud voice, and in the tone of one not accustomed to contradiction—"Ye should be content, vain, blind, weak*as ye are, to enjoy the present, and to hope for the future; and search not to see the viewless forms who are weaving the web of destiny around you: for, should you see them, farewell for ever the pleasures of the present; they would be lost in the constant anticipation of a miserable future. You see the Lord sitting at the banquet"—and he stared wildly at Rupert—"know you that he has plotted *fratricide*; that he is plotting"—

"Do not look so horribly at me," exclaimed Rupert, violently agitated—"I did not murder him!"—

The man, interrupted, concluded not his sentence, but suddenly started from his seat, beat his clenched hand against his forehead,

and cried out—"I see, I see the visions burst upon me—my sight aches with horror—the child, the child, they murder him!"—

"Mean you my child!" cried the Lady Isabella, rushing forward with the boy in an agony of fear, and fixing her look of frenzy on the minstrel.

Philippa permitted not an answer, but, with a master-piece of art, descended from her place, crying, "Some attendance there to the Lady Isabella; a fit of delirium has seized her; bear her quickly to her apartment."

The hall was now a scene of general confusion. Astonishment at the minstrel, and interest for Isabella, filled alternately the minds of all. Philippa and Emma attended the Lady Isabella to her chamber. The guests retired to their apartments; and, when the Lady Philippa again returned to the hall, she found only two of the minstrels remaining. The third had departed, the others knew not where. The Lady enquired whether he also.

had been sent by Walter? They answered, that he had not; he had joined them only at the gates of the castle; and their astonishment at his knowledge was mutual.

CHAPTER VIII.

How beautiful is night!
A dewy freshness fills the silent air,
No mist obscures, no cloud, nor speck, nor stain,
Breaks the serene of Heaven :
In full-orb'd glory yonder moon divine
Rolls through the dark blue depths.

SOUTHEY'S THALABA.

EMMA was left alone with Isabella in her apartment, attempting as far as possible to tranquilize her mind, after the sudden alarm which she had received from the strange and uncertain forebodings of the minstrel. She knew not whether, in her present disturbed and miserable state, it were better to break to her the plans of Lord Rupert and Philippa, now that there was no means of obviating their execution; or to pass them over in total silence. Emma thought the extraordinary

words of the harper, in the hall, might perchance cause Philippa to delay the execution of her designs.

While she was thus considering which course to pursue, Isabella herself enquired, "what she had heard, after their parting in the morning, and if her fears for her child had been justly founded?"—Emma endeavoured to dissuade the unhappy lady from further enquiry, saying "Do not ask, dearest friend; but endeavour to soothe your present agitation, and retire to repose—to-morrow I will tell you all."

"No, Emma—now, now—not to-morrow," cried Isabella—"if Heaven has worse in store for me, the anticipation brings a greater torment with it than the most horrible reality can possibly afflict me with. Knowing that the thunder-bolt must fall, and bring destruction in its course, let it fall instantly, and keep me not on this torture of suspense. I am now almost sunk to the lowest depths of human wretchedness!—My Henry slumbers tombless

among the dead :—My child !—those who should have surrounded him with their protection and their love, are plotting for his destruction—My mind, Emma, distracted by horrible forebodings of calamity, and by hopes that are almost hopeless, is sinking beneath the weighty pressure of my afflictions. Let my infant perish—let my reason be overpowered—let me lose all sense of pleasure or of pain—oblivion is my only refuge—insanity is the harbour to which my sorrows would conduct me, and in it only can I hope for any thing of refuge or repose.”

As she said this her voice was raised, and her eyes looked wildly :—Emma was terrified, and knew not in what manner it were best to act—her reason was now evidently wavering, and to repeat to her all the alarming circumstances with which she had become acquainted, would doubtless have been more than her spirit could have borne.

Emma endeavoured, in a soothing voice, to

assure her, that there existed nothing to alarm her, and to persuade her to her couch. But all efforts were vain—Isabella persevered in her determination of knowing the unextenuated truth of all that was meditated against her, saying, with a look of something of her ancient dignity, but with a much severer air than Emma had ever witnessed in the expression of her gentle brow,—“Let me entreat you, if misery has any power to entreat; or, if the wretched and degraded widow of Montresor has any power to command—let me command you to declare the worst that may await me.”

Emma perceived that it was useless to resist; and, with all the precaution that affection could suggest, she discovered to her the plans of Rupert and Philippa. —Isabella listened, with fixed composure, to the tale of horror: she seemed as if collecting all her energies to combat the encroachments of her former madness — she raised her hand to her forehead, and pressed it tightly against her brow. —Emma

dreaded the passionless look, and calm tone, in which she said—"Now all my hopes have perished!"—more than the wildness of eye, and the raised voice with which she had spoken previously to the reception of her fearful story—more than the tears and lamentations of maternal anguish, which she had endeavoured to guard against by the manner of her relation.

Isabella sat in mute and motionless affliction; not a tear trembled in her eye; not a word of lamentation issued from her divided lips; not even a sigh escaped the heart; which appeared to have been checked in its pulsations by the intervention of some terrible agency.—Her friend endeavoured to awaken her from the deep stupor that had overpowered her perceptions.—All interference was in vain—Isabella seemed not even to hear the words addressed to her, but sat, like some marble image of affliction, motionless, breathless, silent.

Unable to bear the presence of sorrow so

painfully expressed, and yet determined not to relinquish the post to which her affection had appointed her, Emma retired to the projecting window of the apartment, which not only gave a view of the surrounding scenery, but from which, as it looked into the courtyard of the castle, and yielded a prospect of the gate, she could see if any one either entered or departed.—The moon had not yet risen; but the stars shone brightly in the dark blue firmament. The sky was unobscured by a single cloud; and not a sound broke upon her ear, save the tread of the warder on the battlements, whose eye was continually glancing towards the northern beacon, lest it should give, unnoticed, the signal of the approaching enemy.—The landscape was involved in shadow. The sea and the forest, the cultivated plains, and the hills that rose in the distance, wrapped in the misty curtain of the dark, reposed in universal stillness. The boundary between the earth and sky was only distinguished where, in the

east, the rising moon faintly illumined the horizon, while the soaring towers of Montresor, even amid the obscurities of night, seemed to claim their habitual pre-eminence, and forced themselves upon the eye, distinguished from the darkness of the surrounding landscape, by their masses of a deeper and more substantial gloom. Wherever Emma turned her eyes, whether upon the sleeping earth, which, wrapt in its dewy slumbers, presented to the imagination an emblem of entire serenity, or whether she looked upwards to the Heavens, upon the radiance of those innumerable orbs which were there quietly fulfilling the destiny of their creation, she was addressed by the sensible arguments of the greatness and of the majesty of the Eternal. "Surely thou must be good, Lord!"—she exclaimed—"Surely, thou must be good, and yet why is Isabella wretched! Why is her innocent infant destined to fall a prey to the designs of such injurious persons as Rupert and Philippa?—Why do the wicked triumph?"

As she was thus meditating within her heart, and indulging in an unusual train of contemplation, which almost led her to suspect the unerring justice of the Almighty, she saw one of the doors of the castle open, and a man, bearing a torch, issue forth into the court. Two others and a female followed.—The woman was evidently Philippa,—no one could look upon that tall figure, even enveloped as it now was, in a mantle that completely covered her and fell in massy folds around her person, without distinguishing the proud and lofty bearing of the wife of Rupert.—She seemed to be earnestly giving her directions to the person who attended her. The second man, who, from a certain retiring manner of separating himself from the principal actors of the scene, Emma imagined to be Rupert, seldom seemed to mingle in the conference.—The man, who had first appeared with the torch, withdrew—he presently returned, leading a couple of horses. As Emma gazed upon the scene passing silently beneath, she saw the

child of Isabella conducted from the castle,—he came forth as if delighted with the novelty of the occasion. Philippa and Rupert kissed him with apparent tenderness—he was then placed in the arms of one of the men, who were already mounted, and whom Emma readily divined to be two of the minstrels. The gates of the castle were opened, and as Emma saw the horsemen disappearing through the archway, she could no longer restrain herself from clasping her hands together in the agony of grief, and exclaiming, “O heavens, the child! the child!”—

Isabella’s ear immediately caught the sound; the feelings of a mother—the last that ever leave us,—were not yet dead within her. The mention of her child aroused her soul from the stupor of its despair; and she rushed forward towards the window; but ere she reached it, she stopped suddenly—beat her closed hand against her forehead, and cried, in a voice that would have awakened pity even in

the ambitious soul of Philippa, "O, no, no, I cannot *look* upon the death of my boy!"—and she sunk motionless on a couch.

It is only when time has stolen something of the poignancy of grief, that the soul has room to admit the suggestions of sympathy, or that the remonstrances of affection can be heard. In the first moments of our sorrow, when the blow is recently inflicted, every sense is full, and the mind stunned, and the heart occupied. When the violence of grief is self-exhausted, and nature is spontaneously delivered of the weight that overpowered her, and the faculties begin to recover their elasticity, the voice of counsel may effectually be addressed to us. When affliction has subsided into tenderness; when calamity, losing the distinctness of present fact, has become registered among the fading images of the memory, the tears and the admonishments of those who love us, may aid the spirit in recovering its peace, by recalling it to our immediate interests and to our living at-

tachments. When we have combated with the waves, and mastered them by our own exertions, Sympathy and Consolation may stand upon the shore and smile a welcome upon our deliverance, and extend the helping hand to our ascent; but, during the peril of the severer struggle, their officious aid would only co-operate with the difficulties of the time, and rather oppress us than assist. Emma's heart convinced her of this truth—she felt that any effort to console, in a moment of such unutterable anguish, had been an insult to the sacredness of sorrow. She spoke not, but seated herself by the side of Isabella on the couch, and wept.—She had not long sat lamenting, before she was struck with the folly of thus squandering, in indolent despair, those irrevocable moments in which perchance the safety of the little Edward might be secured. She determined no longer to remain inactive.—An ally was to be sought, and to be entreated.—To whom to address herself she knew not;—no

time was to be lost;—the selection was desperate, and Providence must direct her.

As Emma rose from her seat and hastened towards the door with the purpose of applying to some one of the guests of Montresor, for assistance against the wickedness of his host, it suddenly occurred to her recollection that she had once witnessed the characters of a milder nature in the conduct of Sir Leon Harcourt.—She remembered the indignant frown with which he had rescued a rebellious charger from the too rigid inflictions of a ferocious groom.—She thought that she had once remarked an approving smile upon his cheek, at the relation of an act of generous self-devotion.—These things had made but slight impression upon her at the moment of their occurrence; she had then conceived, that other motives than humanity mingled with that rebuke of cruelty; that other feelings than noble sentiment had been the occasion of that smile. These past depreciating suspicions now ap-

peared to her like guilty prepossessions that should never have been indulged. All the buoyancy of youthful spirits revived within her, and hope, recovering its ascendancy, cast over every object the brightness of its nature.—Trifles light as air, to the wretched, as to the jealous, are confirmations strong as proofs of holy writ. These things, insignificant as they may appear, seemed to Emma to promise the return of a better fortune, and preserved her from sinking into absolute despair. Besides, Sir Leon was already marked with the evident symbols of an age in which passion ought to be enfeebled, and the principles confirmed. The lines upon his brow, the white that mingled with the curling sable of his hair, were, to the innocence of Emma's mind, the sureties for his willing protection.—“It is the light of heaven!”—she cried, as she hastened from the chamber of Isabella,—“the thought has been delayed thus late, that the work of deliverance may be the work of Providence alone.”

Thank God! She was prevented from appealing to the unpitying nature of that bold, bad man.

As Emma was passing rapidly towards the side of the castle tenanted by Sir Leon, on turning the corner of the long and narrow passage, she found herself opposite to De Valmacourt. Breathless, from the speed with which she was advancing,—agitated by the momentous interests that occupied her mind—alarmed at the presence of Sir Hervé, her voice and strength failed her, and, pale and trembling, she was compelled to lean against the wall for a support. The knight seemed, like herself, to be intent upon some important action. All the lightness, all the artificial exterior of his manner was dismissed.—Fully possessed by the thought that predominated within him, he perceived not the emotion of Emma; but taking her hand between both of his, exclaimed, with a look of deepest interest, and a voice of noble and ingenuous earnest-

ness—"This meeting is indeed fortunate!—Lady Emma, I have in vain sought for an occasion of communicating with you on a matter of the weightiest consequence.—It was you whom I was this moment seeking. There is something terrible, either past or anticipated, which, during this eventful day, has cast over that gentle brow an air of sorrow and distraction.—May I implore you, lady, to confide in one who will not wrong your trust, and who may have the ability to assist you?"

Emma could not answer—her voice refused its office, but she sobbed audibly, put her hand upon her heart, as if to suppress its violent agitations, and Sir Hervé continued with a tone of greater animation—"I entreat you, answer me—does any danger threaten the Lady Isabella and her child?"

A flood of tears had now relieved the painful oppression of Emma's breast, and she answered distinctly, but with difficulty, "not the Countess—but oh! the child!—"

“Lady, I know that I am considered—I know that you consider me as giddy, frivolous, and vain,” said De Valmacourt—“do not suffer any of your past opinions to prevent the fulness of your present confidence.—Volatile I am—vain perhaps I may be—but, when I see my fellow-creatures in distress, my heart burns to aid them; my sword is ever ready for their defence, and my life or fortune I hold but as vassals at their command.—Say but in what manner I can be exercised in the service of the Countess of Montresor, and behold me her affianced soldier.”

“Oh! thank you! thank you!” cried Emma in a voice of joyful emotion,—“we do indeed need protection.”

“Aye, so I feared—I have marked the ambition of Philippa, and how easily she governs the weak mind of Lord Rupert. But I could never have suspected that her swelling and imperious disposition would have seduced her into such flagrant iniquities, had not your

evident emotion on the battlements—of my unpardonable behaviour there, we will speak hereafter, lady—and the extraordinary words which my folly was the means of eliciting from that wild, mysterious Scot, awakened my suspicion of some immediate danger.—You, lady, must inform me by what means I may administer to the defeat of her purposes.”

“ Sir Hervé, you will scarce believe me—at this moment the stratagems against the infant heir of Montresor are in course of execution.”

“ At this moment,” cried Sir Hervé impatiently, and he began to tighten the hold by which his sword was suspended.

“ Those minstrels,” continued Emma, “ who so melodiously descanted upon the praise of virtue, are the bloody men entrusted with the deed, and have even now borne away the infant from his home—I saw them—perchance to instant *murder* !”

“ Nay, nay, fear not lady,” cried Sir Hervé,

with generous indignation—"bear him away they may; but by Heaven they shall bring him back again."

"O! speak not so loud, or we are overheard."

"I will away this instant, and ere to-morrow—"

"If," interrupted Emma, "success should attend your valour, return not hither with the infant—bear him to the court of Edward—the king loved his father—there tell the tale of his guardian's perfidy, and call down royal vengeance on the head of the guilty."

"I will, I will," cried Sir Hervé, with the confidence of natural valour and a virtuous cause—"the wicked shall yet suffer the punishment due to their villany;—and, when all is well again," said he, more softly, and taking the hand of Emma—"if by *my* means the Lady Isabella and her child should find a happy haven from sorrow and from danger, may I not, fairest Emma, hope to receive some

reward of kindness from your gratitude, if not from your love?"

"Oh! talk not thus at such a perilous moment," exclaimed Emma—"can I ever cease to feel gratitude for him, who shall restore peace to the mind of my more than mother?"

"To gain that gratitude," answered De Valmacourt, "what would I not undergo!—Adieu!—If I preserve the boy, you shall by some means hear from me by day-break—but if I fail—"

"Let us not think of failure—"

"May Heaven protect the just!—adieu! adieu!"—

"Adieu!" answered Emma; and they separated—the one to prepare for his instant departure; the other, with tidings of hope, to the chamber of Isabella.

CHAPTER IX.

Now I defy thee, Chance. Fortune's brow hath frown'd
E'en to the utmost wrinkle it can bend;
Her venom's spit.—Alas! what's more to mourn for?
What son—what comfort that she can deprive?

MARSTON'S ANTONIO AND MELLIDA.

WHEN Emma returned from her interview with De Valmacourt, she found Isabella still seated in the very attitude in which she had left her,—her head leaning on her hand, and her eyes bent on vacancy. Beaming with impatient hope, she was on the point of revealing to her, with incautious precipitation, the prospects of returning happiness; but, as she approached nearer to the seat of Isabella, and read the deep characters of sorrow on her brow, she perceived that such a state of men-

tal stupor could not be too cautiously addressed. As she seated herself by the side of the Countess of Montresor, and took her hand within hers, and pressed it to her lips, and said in a voice of suppressed animation, "Arise, dearest Isabella—arise, I have most hopeful news to tell you."—The lady made a slight motion, that discovered her perception of the sound; but it was long before the faculties could be recalled to comprehend the sense that it conveyed.—"Those wicked men," said Emma, "cannot have proceeded far beyond the castle. Sir Hervé is hastening to pursue, and should he overtake them, the boy is safe for ever."

"O Heaven bless him!" exclaimed Isabella, "a widow's prayers be on him. I have long trusted to the flatteries of hope, and its promises have ever ended in disappointment; yet still how willingly do I again deliver up my mind to its sweet deceptions! But if it again deceive, Emma"—

"It will not.—Oh!—It will not—but now

retire to repose, and endeavour to compose the agitation of your breast."

"Oh! no—no repose," cried Isabella; "here I will sit by the casement, and watch the return of De Valmacourt—I will be the first to receive my boy."

"He is not to bring him here," said Emma; "but to bear him instantly to King Edward, to claim protection, and demand his justice. But if Sir Hervé is successful in his benevolent enterprize, we are by day-break to receive some signal of his success."

"Well, well, then I'll wait that signal; for indeed I cannot rest."—Thus speaking, Isabella seated herself at the window; Emma anxiously surveying every change of her countenance, as the emotions of hope and fear alternately predominated, and dreading the event of so solicitous a time, placed herself beside her. The moon had now risen,

—— and overhead,

Regardless of the stir of this low world,
Held on her heavenly way.

The vast and lofty towers of Montresor, illumined by its beams, raised their silver-crested battlements to the quiet heavens, and its rays, glancing on the arms and the iron mail of the sentinel, as he paced his nightly rounds on the castle walls, gave an outline of flickering light to the tall, dark figure. All was so still, that a leaf, falling before the autumnal breeze, was heard distinctly; and this was the only sound that broke the midnight silence; save when at intervals, some watch-dog, afar off, was heard baying to the moon.—How anxiously did the expectant Isabella and her friend wait, till they saw Sir Hervé de Valmacourt and his attendant, mounted on their steeds, appear in the castle-yard! How did their hopes for the safety of the infant receive fresh vigour, when, after a world of hesitation and enquiry, they saw the surly sentinels unbar the massive gates, and heard the horses of the knight and his servant prancing over the drawbridge.

“Now,” said Isabella, “if my child still

lives, there is yet a hope of his preservation."

Neither, after this, dared interrupt the silence. The widowed mother of the boy held the hand of Emma grasped between hers, and sat, almost fearing to move, lest the signal of Sir Hervé should be given unheard.

At length the day-light began to break, and the glooms of night gradually receded. Nature opened upon the view—the thin grey clouds towards the east became tinted with the faint blush of morning; they assumed a ruddier hue; they glowed with the brightest tints of heaven, and then the sun arose in all its majesty of light and glory.

A chill air rose with the morning. Emma wrapt her mantle closer around her; but Isabella seemed insensible to all bodily pain—the anguish of her mind was too acute to permit the remembrance of any lighter evils. Her friend longed to hear her speak, yet feared addressing her. What theme could afford

argument for such a moment ! They each prayed internally to the Almighty for his protection ; but to speak upon so deep and so uncertain an interest, were only to add agonies to fear, or too fondly foster expectation. At length Isabella spoke—it was in a low, mournful tone, and she pressed Emma’s hand closely to her heart, as she said—“ If my infant still survives to me, dearest friend, cheered by the love of you and of my child, although the fairest sun of my happiness has for ever set in the grave of my Henry, I may yet hope, comforted by the mild beams of religion and of filial affection, to pass the remnant of my days in patience and in peace ; and sometimes, while perchance hearing of the gallant deeds and virtues of my boy, or gazing on the living image of my lord, I may still enjoy a momentary burst of earthly pleasure, and find that I have something in the world worth living for.—But if he fall—if no signal be heard from De Valmacourt—Emma—my brain, my brain—I

feel it *cannot* sustain a second disappointment."

As the Lady Isabella uttered those mournful words, she pressed her forehead with her hand, and afterwards, in an agony of silent expectation, waited for some notice from Sir Hervé.

The sun had now ascended high above the horizon, and, having dispersed the scattered clouds that hung about its dawning splendour, was careering in a sky of perfect azure, that afforded a field worthy to be the arena of so bright a charioteer. The dewy plains sparkled in its beams, and creation awakened to all the fragrance, and the beauty, and the melody of morning.

As Isabella continued to watch for De Valmacourt, every moment of delay increased her agony of suspense, stole something from the fervour of her hopes, and urged her nearer to despair. It was now almost noon. No signal from Sir Hervé had been received. The lady, suddenly rising from her seat, took the arm of

Emma, and with a voice and manner of wild resolve—"We have now another duty," she exclaimed—"we could not protect him living, but we may vindicate him dead."

Emma perceived that it were vain to interpose with the present design of Isabella. She knew not what might be the half frantic resolution of the widowed mother of young Edward; but, distracted as was her deportment, and hurried as was her action, there was an impressive dignity about it—the dignity of virtue and of sorrow—that constrained the mind of her companion into submission, and she silently yielded to her direction.

With impatient rapidity they descended to the hall. It was now the hour in which the guests regularly assembled. They were collected together around Philippa, at the farther end of the apartment, as Isabella and Emma entered it. At the door the Countess of Montresor paused a moment; leant on the shoulder of her friend; passed the hand

across the brow; heaved a long, deep sigh, as if to recover her failing resolution, and, with an air of solemn majesty, advanced towards the raised part of the hall, on which the inmates of the castle were standing. As Isabella proceeded slowly onward, that hall appeared to Emma's imagination to be converted into a court of solemn accusation. There was something so peculiar in the manner of Isabella that the companions of Rupert and Philippa, who had been accustomed to see her retiring from the flux of company, and timidly withdrawing herself from observation, broke off the various topics on which they had been severally engaged, and, with anxious curiosity, waited to hear the origin, and to mark the event of so extraordinary a movement. When Isabella had advanced to within a short distance of the company, leaning her left arm on the shoulder of Emma, and speaking in a voice that was low from native modesty, but firm with the energies of sorrow—"You are astonished,

Lords," she began, "that I, a weak and timid woman, whom you have ever witnessed retreating from the ascendancy that is her due, and loving to shield herself from the scrutiny of the many, behind the veil of her affliction, should thus discharge herself of all the sad restraints that have made silence and solitude habitual to her nature, and here come voluntarily forward, to challenge, with unwomanly boldness, those free and unrebuked regards at which her spirit trembles. They have said that my reason is disturbed. I heeded not their insinuations—what recked I of the world's opinion, when he, who was to me the light of it, had for ever passed away? But were I mad, as I am reported, could I thus tranquillize my deep affliction, and thus controul the resentment of my wrongs, and thus calmly stand before you, Lords, to raise the voice of a widowed wife, and of a childless mother, with the cry of accusation and of prayer?"—The lady paused, a deep sob impeded her utterance. The guests

looked upon each other in silent astonishment. Rupert spoke apart with Philippa, and that artful woman was on the point of interfering, when Isabella, waving her away, continued—
“If you have any pity, hear me—if you have any charity, revenge my injuries. I do not speak from the ignorant surmises of the imagination—I have proof and warrant for my words—I have testimony irrefragable—assurance as clear as the noon-day, to authorize my course, when I accuse, thus publicly, the Lord Rupert and his wife of conspiring against the life and honour of my husband, and as the murderers of my child.”

“Merciful Heaven!” exclaimed Philippa—
“sorrow has made thee wild indeed.”

“No,” cried Isabella—“that subterfuge can succeed no longer: you know that I too justly charge you; and that mortal paleness—and now that flush of shame, are the silent confessions of your guilt.”

“How her mind wanders,” observed Phi-

lipa with recovered composure, casting a look of compassion on the widow of Montresor, and addressing herself to the witnesses of the scene.

"Why the child was here even now!" exclaimed Sir Leon, "so that part of the story at least must be unfounded.—Surely I saw him this morning?"

"No, not this morning; it was last evening," answered Lord James Fitz-Grey.

"Oh! are ye men and soldiers?" cried Isabella—"are ye Christian knights, and can you so coldly gaze upon a woman's tears, and so ruthlessly deliberate their cause? I had thought that every sword had sprung from its scabbard; that every heart had swollen with indignation; at a tale so sad as mine is—my husband barbarously slain—my boy—my gentle, my beautiful boy—borne away by the creatures of Philippa—borne from his home by midnight—the Lady Emma here, saw their departure."

"Idle imaginations," cried Philippa, with a

smile of mingled pity and contempt—"the child is now in the castle."

"Produce him then!" exclaimed Isabella.

"Aye, let him be sent for."—"It will calm the Lady's distress."—"Let some one hasten to seek the infant"—muttered the companions of Philippa, with some little indications of compassion.—"It is a pity the poor lady should suffer thus."

"Oh! ye may seek," cried Isabella, with accents of the deepest anguish—"ye may seek my child, but never shall he be found again!"

Scarce were the words uttered, when a sentinel, with an expression of strong interest, and stammering in his speech, from the eagerness to communicate his intelligence, burst suddenly into the hall, and, addressing himself immediately to Philippa, informed her that a band of armed men, whose numbers the messenger had not been able to calculate, were proceeding through the forest towards the castle; and that the sounds of their martial measures might

already be distinctly heard from the battlements.

“Are they Scots?” asked the lady, eagerly.

“No, they are not plaided troops,” replied the man.

“Away then, cowardly fellow—return thee to thy watch—they come not hostilely against the castle.”

The sentinel departed. Philippa was not dissatisfied with an interruption which had distracted the attention of the guests from the charges of Isabella, and had given her time to meditate the means of avoiding the too sudden disclosure of the boy's absence. She was beginning to address the Countess, when several female attendants rushed towards her, and with signs of the most afflicting terror in their countenances, announced that the castle was surrounded. They had not ceased their tale when a second soldier entered, with the confirmation of their words.

“Is it even so!” exclaimed Philippa—“Lord Rupert, we must go and reconnoitre these aggressors.”—As she spoke she stalked fearlessly forth from the apartment—Lord Rupert and the guests followed her. Isabella and Emma were left alone in the hall.

CHAPTER X.

—Κατάχαλλον ἄπαν

Πίδιον ἀστρακτι.

Ὅν γάρ τι φαύλης ἦλθε.

EURIPIDES PHŒNISSÆ.

—Our castle's strength

Will laugh a siege to scorn : here let them lie,

Till famine and the ague eat them up :—

—————The castle's gently rendered.

MACBETH.

WHEN the Lady Philippa had ascended the battlements, she was the witness of a scene that threatened destruction to all her lofty purposes of ambition. The troops, who were already collected in front of the castle, far exceeded the force within the walls. They appeared the choicest veterans of some victorious army, eager for the conflict, and emboldened by habitual success. The brightness of

their arms—the opulence of their accoutrement—the neighing ardour of their horses—the lengthening lines of reinforcement that were still issuing from the dark coverture of the forest, and forming upon the plain before her—all intelligibly declared that this preparation had not been made by one whose attempts were easily to be frustrated. Whencesoever the armament had arrived, or from whatever cause it had been undertaken, it was evident that skill and power presided at the equipment. As the soldiery stood arrayed in all the pomp of war, surrounded by the fairest works of nature, with plumes waving, with banners flying, and with arms glistening to the sun, they had formed a glorious sight to gaze upon as a peaceful pageant; but it was now a thing of terrible import to look on the collected multitude, and reflect how few perchance should part where so many were assembling. The busy and confused sound of their mingled voices, falling from afar upon the ear, seemed like the

indefatigable murmur of many bees thronging on a summer's day, in ceaseless operation about their hive. Now there was a pause—a general movement succeeded. They appeared to be making ready for immediate attack; and large and ponderous pieces of artillery, and machines for casting stones, and other missive annoyances into the castle, were brought forward to the van.

While the Lady Philippa was looking down in silence upon all that passed before her, the royal standard of England was raised in the midst. A trumpet sounded thrice, and a herald, mounted on a white palfrey, rode forward before the ranks, proclaiming in a loud voice—

“ Lord Rupert De Montresor, accused of privily designing the murder of his brother, and an unjust usurpation of his demesne, is summoned, either to deliver himself up to the judges here appointed by his sovereign lord the king to investigate the truth of these solemn allegations, or, refusing, will be declared con-

tumacious, and doomed to suffer the lawful penalties of a rebel and a traitor."

At each word the herald spoke, the Lady Philippa grew paler and more pale; but not the quivering of a lip, or a moment's hesitation of the voice, denoted any symptom of apprehension.

The Lord Rupert turned an eye of timid inquiry towards his wife.

The guests were gathered together into groups, consulting on the best method of departure, and muttering their suspicions. Their reproaches against Philippa and Rupert were not loudly spoken, for there was yet power on the side of the guilty; but they mutually whispered their aversion, and promised, on their deliverance, to afford their tardy aid to revenge the wrongs of Isabella. The Lady Philippa marked their actions. Their looks and gestures, constrained as they were by her presence, sufficiently intimated to her comprehensive scan all that was working in their hearts,

or was confided in their secret communications. For them there was a frown of bitterness, that threatened a repayment of their fickle favour, though a smile of contempt curled about her mouth, and lurked at the corner of her averted eye. For Rupert there was a glance of sarcastic indignation, and a brief expression of disdain—Then turning from them, she summoned a herald to her side, and, with an undaunted voice, commanded him to proclaim *Defiance!*—"Tell the ambassadors of Edward, that, secure in our innocence, we despise his menaces, and refuse to answer to accusations which malice only could suggest."

"Merciful Heaven!" exclaimed Rupert, as he heard the herald proclaim the answer from the walls—"What have you done, Philippa? You will not proclaim war against the king?"

"I have acted as becomes the honour of Montresor, when the coward Lord of Montresor forgot his duty.—Interfere not, man, with the counsels that would deliver you from yourself."

—She leant a little while against the battlement, with her eyes fixt upon the ground, and her arms folded upon her breast in silent meditation.—Lord Rupert stood near, with his regards rivetted upon her, as if he might read his destiny in her movements. Her plans were rapidly formed, and her resolution suddenly and firmly taken. When she raised her head, there was an air of triumph gleaming upon her features, and an imperious grace in the waving action by which she summoned the distant guests to her more immediate presence, that seemed as if she had derived from her momentary reflection the auguries of a glorious consequence, and superstitiously relied on their accomplishment.—“Where’s De Valmacourt?” she exclaimed, as her eye glanced quickly round the companions of her revels, and instantly perceived his absence. “He had not been seen.”

“Who knows aught of Sir Hervé de Valmacourt?” she cried in a louder voice, and

addressing the menials who stood at a distance from the place of conference.

“He departed late last night,” replied one of the vassals.

“Early this morning he means,—my Lady,” cried a second.

“That’s not so well,” continued Philippa—
“but no matter; we shall have strength enough without him.—Lord Henry de Courcy, with what supplies can you assist us?—Fitz-Grey, you must collect your vassals.—Sir Leon, I depend on your assistances. Each of you, friends and fellow-soldiers, must contribute your instant co-operation, and with such alliances, and with the name of Montresor—for it is a name accustomed to command the terror of its adversaries, or else”—and without deigning him a look, she pointed with a hurried motion over her shoulder, to where Rupert hung aloof from their consultation—“or else from such a timid and unenterprising chief

there remains but little real cause of apprehension.—With such a combination of strength and influence, we may defy even the royal Edward to the field, and find the guerdon of empire, where we only sought a security from oppression.”

The guests heard her to the end; but each had his excuses ready. Not one conceded to her plans.—Their loyalty—their doubts of ultimate triumph—their military weakness—the distance of their vassals—were all successively pleaded as reasons for refusal.

“So I guessed,” muttered Philippa.—She would hear no more. She condescended not to entreat. With a tone of sovereignty, she beckoned to her side a party of the armed vassals, and gave orders for the immediate imprisonment of her less daring associates, saying to each, as he was conducted past her —“the first symptom of my defeat signs your death warrant!”

"O Philippa!" cried Rupert—"will you now, alone and unassisted, hold out in opposition to the king?"—

"Peace, man, peace! Who talks in the moment of action?"—

"But if we are defeated!—Think, Philippa, what hopes can we entertain of pardon, having added disloyalty to murder?"

"The dead," answered the Lady, firmly, "do not require any pardon.—Should our swords become powerless against our enemies, they will still, I deem, retain sufficient of their ancient temper to ensure our own destruction."

Thus spoke Philippa, and her countenance declared that her words were no empty exaggeration, but uttered the settled purpose of her soul.

With the skill of an experienced commander, she stationed the archers on the battlements, and arranged every thing that was necessary for sustaining, and carrying on a vigorous opposition to the siege. As she rapidly moved

along the ranks, exhorting and commanding, her words seemed to inspire ardour and courage into the minds of the soldiery—"See!" cried she, triumphantly to Lord Rupert—"see what a woman can perform, while you stand trembling!"

"Think you then, Philippa, that we have so little cause for fear?—Have we bartered our souls' immortal safety for no other recompense than dangers by day, and terrors by night, worse than all the dangers of the day?—Have then my brother and his child suffered, wife, only to bring down upon our heads sin, and infamy, and peril?"

"Cowardly man!—On towards the eastern tower, and endeavour to invigorate the minds of the soldiers by the presence of their commander."

It was in vain that she conducted their intimidated chief towards the troops—He had not a word of encouragement to offer.—The terrors of a guilty conscience occupied him wholly,

and his appearance was rather calculated to arouse than to allay the apprehensions of the vassals. Philippa saw that whatever of energy and force was mingled with the important occasion, must originate in herself. She condemned her own rashness, in urging Rupert to situations of which he was incapable—She felt that she had idly wasted the influence of his authority and name, by a public exposure of his imbecility, when they might still have retained their power, if skilfully surrounded by the mystery of distance: she was endeavouring to imagine an excuse to remove him from the scene of growing danger and solicitude, when, to the astonishment of all, another banner was displayed on the side of the enemy.

The ancient banner of the house of Montresor was unfurled. The well-known square banner—around which the vassals had so often fought; beneath the shade of which they had so often marched to victory; which, under the command of the good Earl Henry, had ever floated

before their eyes as the harbinger of conquest, and sported in the air above them, like an attendant augury of success. It was rent with various services—it had been damaged in many battles—but never had it been displayed on the part of tyranny or injustice—never had the oppressor boasted its alliance, or the unhappy appealed to it in vain. Never had it beat the wind in favour of a cause which Religion had not sanctioned as the right, or which Providence had not honoured in its issues.

When the soldiers saw the loved familiar standard upraised before them, and waiting without the walls, and claiming an admittance to its home, they thought upon the brave Earl Henry, who had in better days commanded them, and then upon their present ignominious chief—the wife-governed Lord of Montresor! —They murmured among themselves—“We have seen that standard before, but never on the side of disloyalty and wrong”—“shall we

fight in opposition to the companion of our early victories?"—"It is destined to prosper; and no human arms shall avail against it." And as the thoughts of the wars and wounds they had sustained in distant lands, while that banner was waving in their sight, rushed back upon their recollection, a sudden shout of enthusiastic gratulation burst simultaneously from them, and with one accord, they cast down their arms at the feet of Philippa.

By the threats of impotent anger—by the changeful promises, and command, and entreaty of disappointed ambition, the lady ineffectually endeavoured to induce them to resume the weapons they had abandoned. Her influence was over. An impulse had been given, which it was impossible to restrain. While she was yet addressing them, with the thoughtless impetuosity with which rebellion ever is characterized, the insurgent vassals had raised the portcullis, lowered the drawbridge, and flung wide the gates. Never before had they been opened to

admit the chief who came in arms against them; —never before had they been under the command of a guilty lord.

When a free entrance had thus been granted, the enemy rushed not in like a band solicitous of booty, but remained at their post, stationary without, while a noble warrior advanced towards the castle, mounted on a coal black palfrey, “which high curvetting, slowly went.” He was surrounded by some twenty knights and squires, above whom, though they were of a valiant and a graceful carriage, and would have shone conspicuous in any inferior company, he soared superior in majesty of figure. The lord was arrayed in a complete suit of glittering hauberk. Both the dignity of his mien, and the distant respect which he received from his companions, proclaimed him as the chief. They rode proudly on together over the clattering drawbridge, and through the shadowy and expanded archway. The lord’s vizor was down when he entered, but he had no sooner

passed the gate, than setting spurs to his horse, and dashing impatiently forward into the midst of the court-yard, he raised the invidious concealment, and looked with a smile of happy kindness round upon the vassals.

Oh! what a loud and lengthened shout of acclamation followed. Never before had sudden and unexpected joy noised itself abroad in so strong and swelling a peal of obstreperous extacy. Philippa, astonished at the sound, looked down from the battlements, on which she stood enwrapt in moody meditation, to survey the cause of the riotous enthusiasm with which the distant echoes were awakened. A well-known—detested—smiling face, beamed up towards her. Alive, and in his own castle, her eye encountered the delighted glance of Earl Henry de Montresor!

No sooner did she perceive him, than her soul confessed the failure of her stratagems, and the certainty of disgrace and punishment. All views of aggrandizement were past. Nothing but degradation and infamy awaited her.

She was attended only by Lord Rupert, and a single soldier. She turned aside to her husband, and whispered some brief communication in his ear—he motioned his assent, and departed.

“I remain here,” she said to her sole companion—“Go you, and greet the return of your triumphant master.”—The man delayed.—“Sir, I would be alone.”—The man turned to depart, and instantly, as if a moment of existence were a thing of too great agony to be endured, she rushed distractedly forward to precipitate herself from the eminence on which she stood. The soldier had anticipated her design, and, by a quick and unexpected movement, counteracted the effort. Never before was the brow of that lady humbled; and now the expression of defeat held but a momentary dominion over her countenance, though her eye ever trembled and turned aside from the inspection of the menial, who had thus powerfully interposed his arm between her fallen pride and her everlasting punishment.

In the mean time, the Earl Henry having received the congratulations of his vassals, dismounted from his horse, and, accompanied by the knights and barons who had entered the castle with him, demanded to be conducted to the presence of his wife and child. The vassals, each eager to show their joy at his return—at his seeming resurrection from the grave—ran eagerly before him towards the hall.

CHAPTER XI.

Ὅυχ' ἴδου Διὸς
Ὀφθαλμός ἔστιν, καὶ παρὰ πόνον.

INCERTI EX STORCO.

VAIN indeed it were for me, with a boyish and all ungifted pen, to describe the rapture, the wild and speechless rapture of the Lady Isabella, when her eyes caught the sight of her long-lost and long-lamented Henry. It were idle to relate how she hung upon his neck, and wept—and how the brave Earl Henry, endeavouring to speak his joy, found that his tongue denied him utterance, and that excess of bliss compelled him to clasp the weeping Isabella in his arms, without a word of greeting.

They were aroused from the interchange of mutual endearments by the entrance of the

noble companions of Earl Henry, who had sought out Lord Rupert and Philippa, and were conducting them to his presence as their judge. At his own entreaty, the Sovereign had invested Henry with the absolute power to condemn or to acquit them. It were an awful privilege to have granted to any being of an inferior nature ; but Edward knew in whom he confided. The lady, with her head erect, and her arms folded, and her brows contracted, looked upon the chains that bound her, as some enraged lioness might eye the bars of her imprisonment, with a spirit that seemed chafed into ferocity by being defeated, and was untamed though conquered. There was a noble savageness about her fall, that moved the admiration even of those who shrunk appalled from the remembrance of her atrocities. She stood the living presentment of a mighty passion, and men wondered at its force and energy, while they trembled at the desolation that it wrought. Lord Rupert stood

by her side, with his fetters clanking loosely; his head drooping; his arms hanging listlessly by his sides; his body bowed beneath the weight of his merited reverses. He scarcely raised his eyes from the ground. As with his pale and haggard countenance, he lingered beside Philippa, the moralising mind might have perceived in those guilty beings the emblems of Crime and Punishment; of Passion and Remorse. His wife cast a hasty look towards him, and scowled indignantly, as if her aspiring nature was degraded by the proximity of so mean and dissimilar a spirit.

They were no sooner brought before Earl Henry, than going up towards his brother with an air of mingled severity and mildness—"Rupert," he began, "I am invested with authority to take your life, as the legitimate punishment for the snares which you have contrived against my own. Thanks be to Providence! through the avarice of your associates in iniquity, it found the means of working my

deliverance. You and Philippa here, are, I doubt not, astonished and dismayed to find me returning hither in safety, to take possession of those rich demesnes from which you vainly hoped that I was for ever separated by my death. But know that, after my attendants had fallen, on the fatal night that my arrival was expected, the emissaries whom you had directed to bear away my body, and privily dispose of it, discovering the remains of life, and, encouraged by the hopes of a second remuneration, provided for my cure. When those who should have been my best supporters turned in hostility against me, those whom they had employed as their instruments of ill, supplied the post that they had abandoned."

"Base villains that they were!" muttered Philippa—"may eternal woes wait on their perfidy!"

"Oh, brother!" cried Rupert, in a voice of abject entreaty—"Oh, brother, pray be merciful in your punishment!"

"Brother, did you show mercy?—You in-

jured *me* without a cause; you meditated my destruction, while I was daily, hourly, heaping benefits on your head:—what mercy do you, what mercy can you expect?"

"O, none from your justice—but from your pity, and your former love"—

"Unloose his fetters!" commanded Earl Henry.

"Merciful God!" exclaimed Rupert, terrified at the command—"you do not mean to have me die in torture—Henry, if I must suffer, let me perish with as little pain as possible. By the memory of our sainted mother—by the virtues of the father I have disgraced—pursue any other vengeance, but do not, do not torture me."

"No, my brother," answered the Earl—"tranquillize your fears, and no longer pour forth before these assembled knights and barons the tide of unmanly supplication. I want no vengeance—You are forgiven, Rupert!"

"Forgiven!" exclaimed the unworthy brother, in a voice of joyful emotion, "O Henry!

O my brother, what a soul is thine! how have I sinned, even for a moment to have entertained a thought of committing evil against thee!"

"Now," continued the Earl, addressing himself to Philippa, "having calmed the anxiety of my brother's mind, my attention is directed towards another culprit. I have known Rupert's nature from an infant, lady, and I also know that you have been the stimulator of his crimes. In you, all his iniquities received their origin. You have been the beautiful seduction that betrayed him to his ruin. But, live, and repent your wrongs, Philippa.—Knock off her chains.—I forgive her!"

The lady extended her hands haughtily to the attendant, as he obeyed the command of his master; but she betrayed no sign of joy, or thankfulness, nor spoke, till she saw the fetters loosened from her wrists, and heard them clanking on the pavement of the hall;—then her eye kindled with its brightest lustre;—a

smile of exultation beamed over her face, and seizing, with a rapid motion, a dagger that was concealed amid her drapery, she exclaimed,—“I need no forgiveness!” and struck it deep into her breast.

All were astonished at the sight, and thronged eagerly around her.—She put aside every assistance, with a wondrous constancy, crying, with a demoniacal emphasis, that thrilled to the hearts of the auditors,—“Still, still I conquer!—the boy, the boy!”

“O Heavens, my child!”—exclaimed Isabella, who, in the rapture of recovering her long-lost lord, had forgotten her alarms for the infant,—“is he not, Henry, with you?”

“With me? Oh! no:—is he in danger then?”

“In danger,” cried Philippa, with a voice of triumph that rose above the agonies of approaching death,—“all danger has long been over—I have here, I trust, found more certain accomplices.—I commanded murder! instant murder! and your boy is now, perchance, if

you believe such fantasies,—a ministering angel.”

“O God, O God!” cried Earl Henry, pressing the Lady Isabella in his arms, while tears of anguish rolled down his cheeks—“is then my bliss thus dashed with sorrow!—must the joyous notes for my return, be lost in the dirges of my infant’s funeral!”—

Lord Rupert was terror-struck, while he gazed upon the tears of his brother,—he feared that his pardon would be recalled on the discovery of this later crime—and the dread of execution recovered all its former hold upon his imagination. Philippa, although on the very brink of her eternal misery, looked up towards him, and comprehending his alarm, pointed to him with a look of pallid and terrific bitterness, and exclaimed, “Earl Henry, can you forgive *this* murder? there stands the trembling culprit, recall your pardon, and let the associate of my crimes become the cold companion of my tomb.”

“O never, never,” cried Earl Henry—“my soul is torn with anguish—you have now indeed struck me to my very heart of heart—but still, I can remember my Redeemer’s answer to him who asked how often his brother might offend against him, and with impunity offend.—The death of our beautiful infant has brought an immeasurable weight of wretchedness to my Isabella and myself—but live, Rupert, and endeavour by your after virtues, to expiate your enormities.—Your brother will never be the means of sending you unrepentant to the grave.”

“Babbling hypocrite!” muttered Philippa, who had not yet expired—“Can you then sorrow for your child’s death, and not revenge it?—are these the ignoble lessons that your superstition teaches?”

“Hold, hold! do not,” cried Emma, who held a crucifix before the imperious woman—“do not thus insult religion, and its wisdom, and its virtues, at the very moment you are

hastening to receive your imperishable sentence before its heavenly tribunal.—Oh! look, Philippa, towards this Holy Being, who perished guiltless to redeem the guilty: press it to your lips, and while yet a spark of vital flame remains unto you, make some sign of penitence—Oh! breathe one prayer for forgiveness.”

Philippa put out her hand to receive the cross;—which Emma, with the smile of a benignant spirit, hoping that she had, perchance, delivered a soul from its offences, placed eagerly in her hand—but no sooner had the dying woman received it, than, with the last remains of human force, and with a scowl of ghastly enmity, she dashed it upon the ground, and exclaiming—“It’s all sleep!—all one long, dark, eternal, dreamless sleep!”—fell dead on the pavement.

Earl Henry, Isabella, and Rupert, assembled round the body, horror-struck at the impious conclusion of a life so wicked; but the

Earl, unwilling that the eyes of Isabella should be shocked by the sight of Philippa's bleeding corse, rendered more terrible by the convulsive efforts with which she had uttered her last blasphemies, ordered some attendants to bear away the body, which they instantly prepared to do.

"Now," said the brave and virtuous man, "let us retire, Isabella, and offer up our devotions to the Almighty; and while returning thanksgiving for my safety, mingle our prayers for his divine assistance to support us under this new, and to me, this unexpected sorrow. —But God's will be done!—And do you, Rupert, humbling yourself before him, entreat a higher pardon than I have power to assure to you, and with the supplications of your penitence, unite the resolutions of amendment."

"Make way there!" interrupted the voice of a man who rushed hastily into the hall, forcing to himself a passage, and regardless of every obstacle, whether it were knight or

vassal, baron or domestic, who caused the impediment to his exulting progress. All eyes were turned instantly towards him—It was Sir Hervé de Valmacourt, bearing in his arms the infant son of Montresor; who, delighted at the sight of his mother, sprung eagerly from him into her affectionate embraces.

“And art thou safe, my child!” exclaimed the happy mother, while tears of joy rapidly chased each other down her cheeks—“and art thou safe my child! Have all our fears been vain!—Do I again clasp my laughing cherub to my heart! Thanks, noble knight! In your every hour of sickness and of danger, a mother’s prayers shall be heard ascending to the throne of Heaven for your health and safety.”

Sir Hervé pressed the hand of Isabella, silently acknowledging how sincerely he felt the import of her words.

Earl Henry approached his boy; but the child, half pleased, half terrified at his bright accoutrements, laid his curling head and his

rosy cheek upon his mother's shoulder, and clung closer to her neck, while from the corner of his averted eye, he looked with smiling and timid admiration on the notice of his martial father.—The delighted parent turned towards the defender of his boy, and while he held his hand in his with grateful pressure, he enquired with anxious kindness of the dangers of the important night in which Sir Hervé had been engaged.

“ My Lord,” answered De Valmacourt, “ let it suffice for the present, that I o’ertook the ruffians, and that you have the infant safe.— My fears of failure, and the difficulties which I had to conquer, and the near destruction of that dear boy of yours, and the relation of the manner in which I providentially arrived only just in time for his deliverance, will make a tale of deep romantic interest for some winter’s night about the ample fireside, when the Lady Isabella, holding her child securely in her arms, may feel in the eventful narrative, that

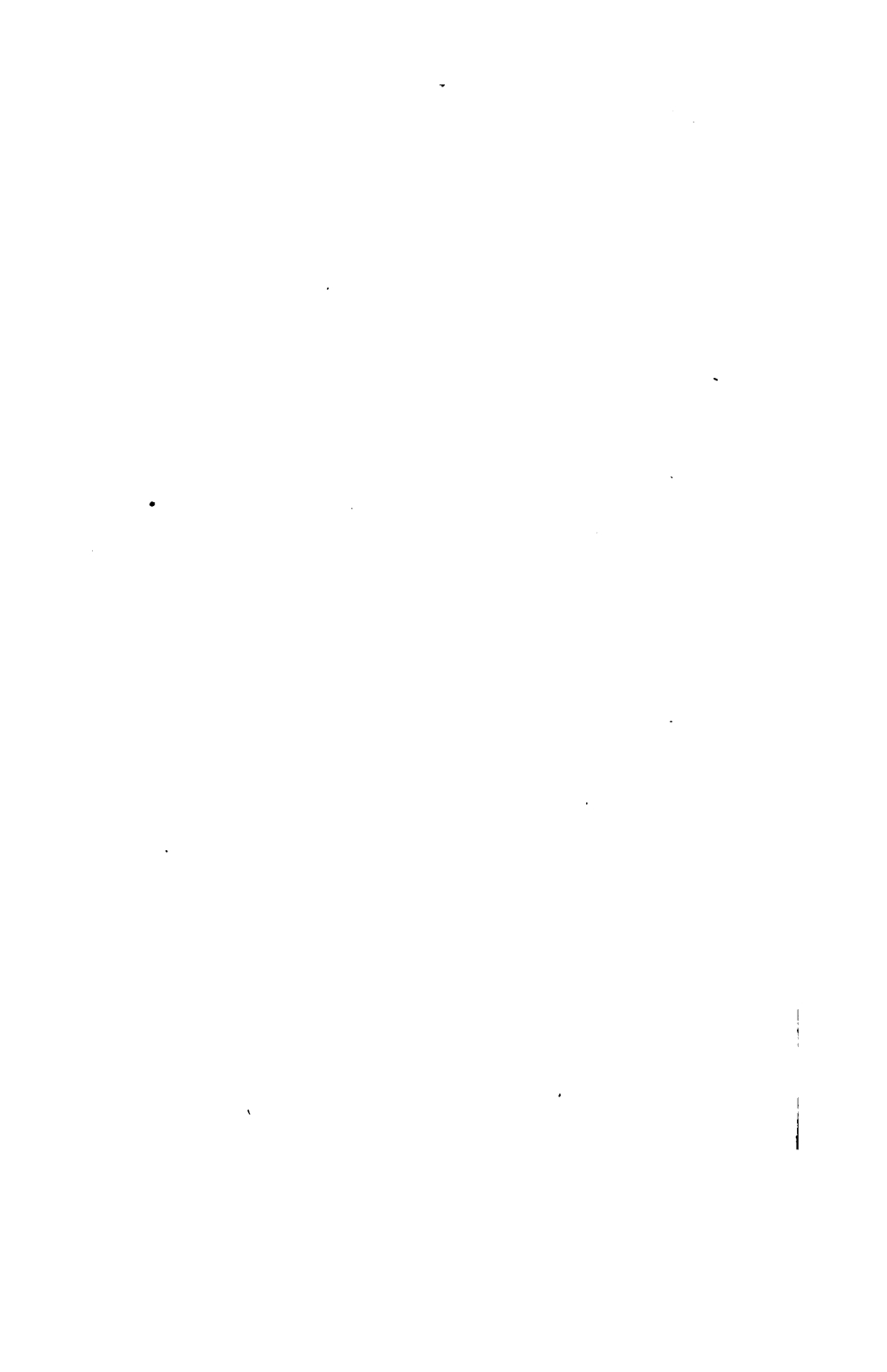
kind of agitating joy, with which mariners, in the tranquillity of their homes, listen to the account of former shipwrecks, or harken to the growing storm, as it wails around their dwelling.—But,” continued Sir Hervé—“ I have been promised a reward from one, whose thanks are far too dearly appreciated, to be passed by unclaimed.”—His eye glanced towards Emma;—Emma’s smile in answer, communicated more delight to the heart of De Valmacourt, than all the studied periods of the most splendid eulogies could possibly have conferred.

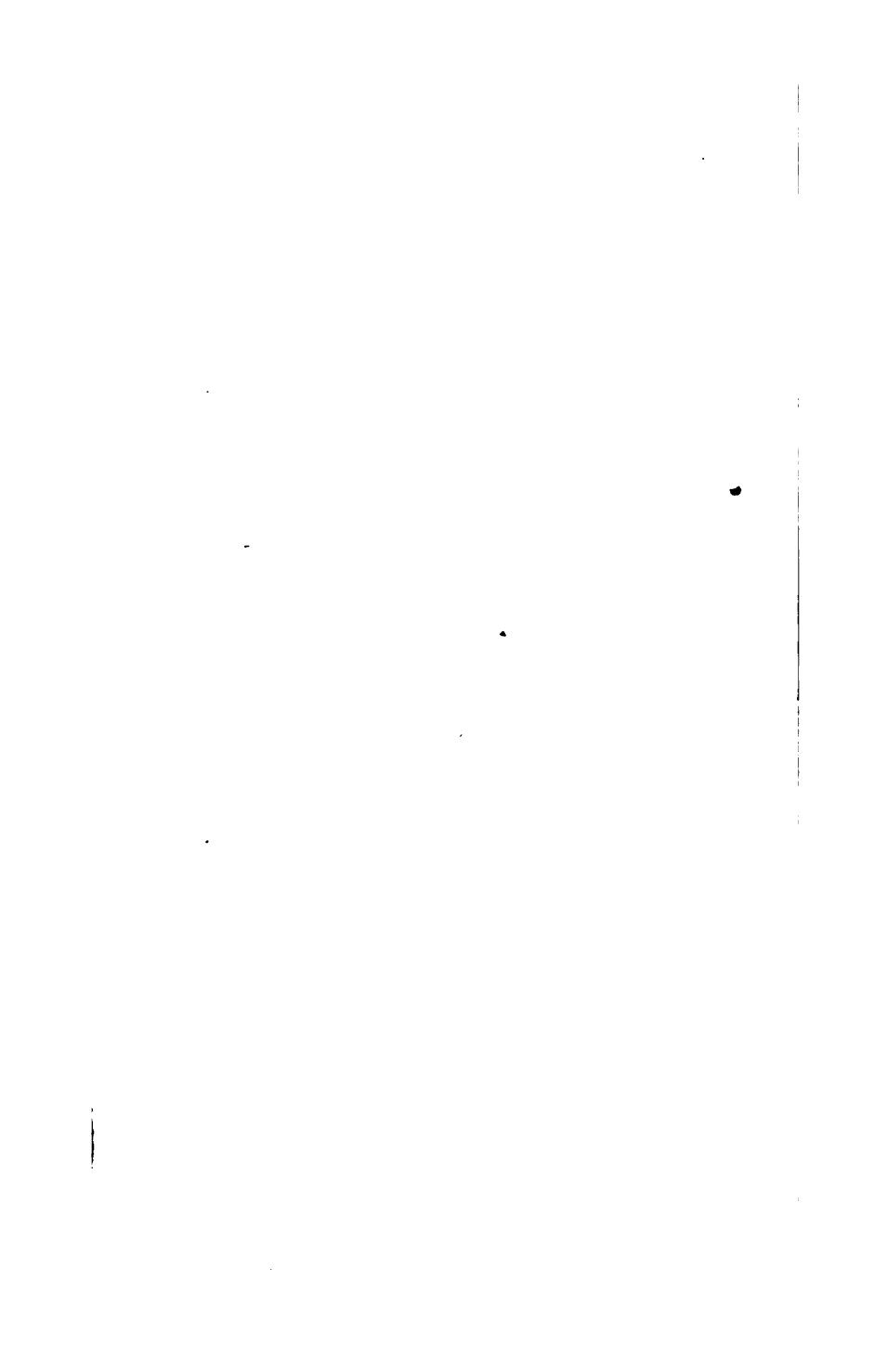
Some few months after this, the Castle of Montresor was gladdened by the happy celebration of the nuptials of Sir Hervé and the Lady Emma.

Tradition has told no further.—Of the succeeding revolutions of the Castle, and the different fortunes of its possessors, all is uncertainty and darkness. The Castle exists no more; and if any descendant of the noble race

of Montresor survives, ignorant of the fame and power of his fathers, he toils, perchance, as a hired labourer on the domain of his ancestors, without any recollection of their glory, or any sentiment of their lofty virtues.

Finis.





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